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CONTENTS

Agenda item 27:

Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (continued)

General debate (continued) 165

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. YANKOV (Bulgaria) expressed his delegation's regret at the fact that the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had failed to reach any specific agreement during 1966 either on questions of general and complete disarmament or on measures aimed at lessening international tension. The failure was due mainly to the unwillingness of the United States to work towards disarmament on a mutually acceptable basis, its present growing military involvement, and its promises to some of its allies, in particular the Federal Republic of Germany.

2. The Bulgarian Government had always maintained that the main goal of all States in disarmament negotiations should be an international treaty on general and complete disarmament, which could be achieved most effectively through rapid and radical methods. However, other initiatives of a more limited and partial character should also be encouraged, provided that they were considered in the perspective of the fundamental goal. Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, establishment of denuclearized zones, extension of the nuclear test ban, and liquidation of foreign military bases would help to promote a solution of the complex problem of general and complete disarmament, and his Government therefore consistently supported such measures. At the same time, it favoured the adoption of still other collateral and partial measures even more limited in scope aimed at promoting mutual confidence and gradual progress in disarmament. It was in that light that his delegation viewed the draft resolutions before the Committee.

3. The flights of aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction beyond national frontiers, which were mentioned in draft resolution A/C.1/L.377, represented a threat to the security of all peoples and could only increase international tension. Any miscalculation or error in such flights could cause incidents with far-reaching political results. Moreover, accidents occurring in such flights could produce dangerous radio-active contamination, damaging the health of the earth's present population and possibly that of future generations as well. While the United States representative had asserted that no harmful radio-active contamination had been produced by the accident involving a United States aircraft carrying nuclear weapons, the essential point was that such accidents should be prevented from happening at all. The General Assembly should therefore call upon all States to discontinue flights of aircraft carrying nuclear weapons.

4. The Hungarian draft resolution (A/C.1/L.374) was based on the generally recognized rules of positive international law prohibiting the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. According to a statement signed by a number of outstanding United States scientists that had been published in *The New York Times* of 20 September 1966, "chemical and biological weapons could be far more dangerous as instruments of mass extermination than anything except nuclear weapons". They must be prohibited not only because of their direct harmful effect, but also because they could lead to the use of more disastrous and powerful means of mass destruction.

5. It was well known that in its aggressive war in Viet-Nam the United States had used anti-personnel and anti-crop chemical weapons. The United States Department of State had announced in March 1966 that about 20,000 acres of South Viet-Nameese crops had been destroyed with herbicides; according to a statement made on 22 July 1966 by the South Viet-Nameese National Liberation Front, the effects on the lives and health of much of the affected population had been disastrous.

6. Despite the United States representative's remarks about the "humaneness" of such weapons and their lack of harmful after-effects, the United States must observe the international regulations prohibiting the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons and should not object to the General Assembly endorsing the 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.

7. The report proposed in draft resolution A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/

Add.2, of which his delegation was a sponsor, would throw light upon some of the most important aspects of the nuclear weapons problem. The information it would provide might play an important part in disarmament negotiations.

8. The partial measures proposed in the first three draft resolutions submitted under the present item would add new and constructive elements to the whole complex of disarmament initiatives. He hoped that the First Committee and the General Assembly would adopt all three. The main and final goal, however, was agreement on general and complete disarmament. For that reason, his delegation looked forward with hope and expectation to the resumption of the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee and believed that, with goodwill and persistent effort, the obstacles to such agreement would be overcome.

9. Mr. KHATRI (Nepal) hoped that, although the Eighteen-Nation Committee had failed to reach any specific agreement on any measure of general and complete disarmament, the discussions which had taken place over the past year would help to facilitate agreement on a number of limited measures, such as the conclusion of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the banning of underground nuclear tests, the creation of nuclear-free zones, and peaceful activities in outer space. He hoped that the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation would lead to more extensive measures, such as agreements to stop the production of fissionable material for military purposes and to stop underground testing. He would support any measure aimed at the reduction of nuclear stockpiles and particularly the demonstrated destruction of all nuclear weapons and a complete ban on their production. The United States proposals on the peaceful uses of fissionable material obtained by the destruction of nuclear weapons^{1/} deserved serious consideration.

10. Underground testing of nuclear weapons enabled the major nuclear Powers to make considerable progress in increasing the yield-to-weight ratio of their weapons and their first-strike capability. The cessation of underground testing was essential if an acceptable balance of mutual obligations under a non-proliferation treaty was to be achieved. He appealed to the nuclear Powers to adopt the suggestions submitted in the joint memorandum of 17 August 1966 of the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee^{2/} in order that a comprehensive test ban treaty might be concluded soon.

11. Real progress towards disarmament could not be made unless the nuclear Powers took steps to eliminate their first-strike capability. For that reason he supported the Soviet proposals for the destruction of a substantial number of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles in the first stage of the disarmament process and for the retention of only a limited number of missiles until the third stage. He also supported the United States proposal concerning percentage reduction of delivery vehicles. The destruction by the

nuclear Powers of even 35 per cent of their delivery vehicles in the first stage of disarmament, in accordance with the United States proposals, would be a step in the right direction. A sub-committee of the Eighteen-Nation Committee might be established to explore thoroughly the Soviet and United States proposals and any others that might be advanced in connexion with the destruction of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles.

12. The present balance of nuclear deterrence would be upset if one of the nuclear Powers outstripped the others in the development of anti-missile missiles. That would lead to further intensification of the nuclear arms race and each nuclear Power would try to develop more sophisticated and powerful missiles and penetration aids in order to render the anti-missile missiles of rival Powers ineffective. It had been reported recently that the United States was planning to develop new kinds of missiles and decoys against which Soviet anti-missile missiles would be ineffective. To reduce the danger of nuclear war, the efforts to improve both first-strike and second-strike capability must be curtailed. The complex safeguard procedures against unauthorized or accidental nuclear attack were not altogether foolproof. Everyone remembered the incident early in 1966 when a bomber had accidentally unloaded its lethal cargo off the coast of Spain. The fact that the bombs had not exploded and safeguard procedures had worked as designed had been fortuitous. He therefore supported the Soviet proposal to prohibit flights by aircraft carrying nuclear weapons beyond their national frontiers and would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/L.37, sponsored by Poland and the Ukrainian SSR.

13. He welcomed the progress towards the development of multilateral agreements for the denuclearization of Africa and Latin America. The nuclear Powers should do their utmost to facilitate the implementation of General Assembly resolution 2033 (XX) and to encourage the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to conclude an agreement for that purpose. Similarly, they should encourage the work in progress for the conclusion of a treaty on the denuclearization of Latin America.

14. The best way to achieve the objective of general and complete disarmament was by stages and through limited measures. Nuclear disarmament must proceed in step with conventional disarmament. If the United States proposal for the destruction of obsolete bombers was adopted, it would prevent such aircraft from falling into the hands of a number of smaller Powers and would contribute to the easing of local tensions in many regions. It was for the same reason that in 1965 he had supported the Maltese proposal to ban the secret amassing of conventional arms and ammunition and their large-scale transfer from one country to another.

15. In his statement of 26 October (1433rd meeting), he had expressed support for the proposal made by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual report for 1965-1966 (A/6301/Add.1) for a study of all aspects of nuclear weapons and their possible use and he would therefore support draft resolution A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/Add.2.

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

^{2/} *Ibid.*, sect. O.

16. In view of the situation today in many parts of the world, including Asia, it was essential that the General Assembly should demand absolute compliance with the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and other international conventions banning the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons in war. The use of chemical weapons was as dangerous and criminal as the use of nuclear weapons. He would therefore vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/L.374.

17. In the important and vital issue of disarmament there could be no lasting achievement without the active participation and co-operation of all the militarily significant and nuclear Powers, including the People's Republic of China. Both the absence of France and the exclusion of China had had an adverse effect on the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. Despite General Assembly resolution 2030 (XX) calling for the convening of a world disarmament conference in 1967, the nuclear Powers as well as others had shown little or no interest in its implementation. A world disarmament conference would be useful not only for a review of the disarmament negotiations to date, including the proposed agreement on non-proliferation in the light of the principle laid down in paragraph 2 (d) of resolution 2028 (XX), but also for the establishment of effective disarmament machinery. While supporting draft resolution A/C.1/L.378, he strongly urged all Member States, especially the big Powers, to ensure that a world disarmament conference was convened as soon as possible.

18. Lord CHALFONT (United Kingdom) thought that the vital question was that of priorities. The Eighteen-Nation Committee had wisely devoted its efforts in the past year primarily to negotiating limited agreements, particularly a treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and a comprehensive test ban treaty. A point had now been reached where agreement on a treaty on non-proliferation was within sight and he hoped that the discussions in the Eighteen-Nation Committee would soon lead to practical results.

19. Draft resolution A/C.1/L.378 seemed to express the aspirations and determination of the First Committee to attain the goal of general and complete disarmament and he would vote for it.

20. He welcomed the study proposed in draft resolution A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/Add.2, which, although perhaps less broad in scope than the Secretary-General's proposal, was practical and sensible; he hoped it could be published as a single, integrated report within the time specified. The part of the report dealing with the security and economic implications of the acquisition and further development of nuclear weapons would be of more importance than the part dealing with the possible use of nuclear weapons. It was generally known that the use of those weapons in war would cause death, destruction and suffering on an unimaginable scale. On the other hand, the security implications and the social and economic implications were too little understood around the world. Great care should be taken to ensure that the proposed study was not subordinated to political rivalries. He hoped therefore that it would be possible to obtain experts whose technical and scientific qualifications would allay any suspicion that they might have political axes to grind.

21. There had been a change of atmosphere in the Committee after the introduction of draft resolutions A/C.1/L.374 and A/C.1/L.377. To his regret, the Committee was now obliged to devote some of its valuable time to tendentious debate on propaganda themes which, in some cases, recalled the worst excesses of the cold war. Occasional attempts to develop similar propaganda themes in the Eighteen-Nation Committee at Geneva had largely failed because neither the Western nor the non-aligned delegations had been prepared to waste time in that way. The First Committee likewise should avoid wasting its time in heated propaganda exchanges which obviously would not promote agreement on serious measures of disarmament, particularly the agreement on non-proliferation for which all members were striving.

22. With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/L.374, his Government was a signatory of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. He wondered if the country sponsoring the draft resolution had also acceded to the Protocol. Bacteriological and chemical weapons were particularly repulsive, and every effort to restrict their use in war would be in the interests of mankind. From the point of view of arms control and disarmament, they raised a particularly difficult practical problem because of the ease with which such weapons could be manufactured and concealed. The problem would need careful and objective consideration in the right place and at the right time. But the manner in which the Hungarian representative had introduced the draft resolution showed beyond doubt that he was attempting to revive the polemics of the cold war. The particular charges which the Hungarian representative had made against the United States had been answered by the United States representative himself. The United Kingdom delegation, for its part, thought that it was highly important to prevent the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons in war. But it was deplorable to take advantage, for purely propaganda purposes, of the sincere desire of all mankind for a peaceful settlement of the Viet-Nam conflict.

23. The Soviet draft resolution on the elimination of foreign military bases from Asia, Africa and Latin America (A/C.1/L.369), submitted under agenda item 98, was another attempt to exploit the idealism and credulity of people who sincerely wanted disarmament and peace by submitting plausible proposals which were designed merely to serve the military and strategic interests of the sponsors. It was neither possible nor desirable to maintain military bases in a country against the wishes of its inhabitants. But in the present unsatisfactory state of the world, in which small countries were threatened by larger neighbours, it was absurd to pretend that the deployment of troops in accordance with mutual defence treaties, freely negotiated and freely adhered to, was in itself a cause of increased tension. In regard to foreign military bases, the Soviet draft resolution made a significant distinction between Europe and other continents. It did not attempt to deny the right of European countries to invite foreign troops on to their soil, but it did imply that countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America could not exercise that right even if they wished to. The real purpose of the draft resolution was, therefore, perfectly obvious. He hoped that it would be withdrawn, as a similar

draft resolution^{3/} had been withdrawn in the Disarmament Commission in 1965.

24. The most extreme example of the kind of propaganda to which he had been referring was draft resolution A/C.1/L.377, submitted by Poland and the Ukrainian SSR. The United States representative had already drawn attention to the fact that totally irrelevant considerations had been included in the preambular paragraphs to bolster a weak argument. Apart from that, the fundamental question of the admissibility of certain military overflights should be considered against its correct background. The existing confrontation between two armed camps representing different ideological and national interests was regrettable, but it was a fact. Furthermore the military strength of the Warsaw Treaty countries was concentrated compactly in Europe and western Asia, and military units and armaments could be moved along interior lines of communication. The main strength of the Western alliance lay in the United States, thousands of miles from the border between the two alliances. That was the sole reason why Western aircraft carrying nuclear weapons crossed national frontiers. There was, incidentally, no means of telling whether Soviet aircraft carrying nuclear weapons ever crossed the frontiers of either or both of the sponsors of the draft resolution. It was useless for the Assembly to call upon States to refrain from certain actions if there was no means of verifying whether the undertakings given were observed. The prohibition suggested in the draft resolution was not likely to reduce international tension. If it were applied, it would certainly give a military advantage to the members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and such an advantage might well increase international tension. Finally, the draft resolution had nothing whatsoever to do with disarmament.

25. Delegations which used the Committee's debates as an occasion for repeated attacks on the United States must, surely, be aware that polemics and propaganda would upset the whole delicate machinery of disarmament negotiations in and outside the Committee. Agreement on certain aspects of disarmament was within reach at last. It would be the height of irresponsibility if the whole Committee did not make a common effort to consolidate the ground already gained.

26. Mr. MATVEEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the question of general and complete disarmament was one of the most important problems of the modern world. Expenditure on armaments now amounted to more than \$130,000 million per year, military expenditure in the United States alone accounting for half that figure. In view of the aggressive policies of the United States and its allies, the peace-loving States were also obliged to increase their defence expenditure. The arms race had an adverse effect on the economies of developing countries as well. According to a report published in The New York Times on 28 May 1966, military expenditure in the developing countries, which urgently needed funds for economic and social development,

had amounted to \$16,000 million. Such a wastage of human and material resources was intolerable when millions of people were suffering from starvation, poverty and disease.

27. The Soviet Union and other socialist countries had constantly advocated general and complete disarmament and other measures to improve the international situation. They had suggested the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation and the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various regions. They had invited the nuclear Powers to give an undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. They had called for a ban on underground nuclear tests and for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. They had made proposals for guaranteeing the security of Europe, eliminating military bases and convening a world disarmament conference. That programme could easily be put into effect if only the Western Powers displayed some willingness to solve the problems of peace and disarmament. Unfortunately they had not yet done so. That was the reason why the Eighteen-Nation Committee had not reached any specific agreement during 1966. For its barbarous war in Viet-Nam, the United States needed armaments and not disarmament. In an article in The New York Times of 17 July 1966 under the title "Do we really want disarmament?", a commentator had written that everyone in government wanted to talk about disarmament, but nobody wanted to do anything about curbing the arms race.

28. In spite of those difficulties, the United Nations should continue its efforts to break the deadlock in the disarmament negotiations and to give effect to General Assembly resolution 2149 (XXI) on non-proliferation. Preparations for a world disarmament conference should be continued. An agreement should be concluded banning underground nuclear weapon tests, with national means of control to ensure compliance with the agreement; and a definite decision should be taken to convene a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons.

29. The draft resolutions on the item at present under discussion dealt with specific disarmament problems. His delegation fully agreed with the arguments advanced by the Hungarian representative in support of draft resolution A/C.1/L.374. The attempts of certain representatives to dismiss the Hungarian proposal as mere propaganda would not deceive anyone, as the proposal was designed to prevent acts offensive to the human conscience. The toxic substances used by the United States forces in twenty-six out of the forty-five provinces of South Viet-Nam in 1965 had killed many of the inhabitants. More than half the population were suffering from serious ailments as a result of eating contaminated foodstuffs. Moreover, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union in his capacity as Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the settlement of the Laotian question had, on 16 March 1966 and 28 April 1966, received telegrams from the Government of Laos stating that United States forces were using chemical substances against the people of Laos as well. The United States had repeatedly been asked to stop using chemical and other toxic substances, but had rejected all requests to that effect.

^{3/} Document DC/218 (see Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, 89th meeting, para. 11), withdrawn at the 102nd meeting of the Disarmament Commission.

It had signed the Geneva Protocol of 1925 but had not yet ratified it, because the United States military authorities wanted a free hand. It was no accident that the United States Army field manual contained a specific statement to the effect that the United States was not a party to any treaty now in force prohibiting or restricting the use in warfare of toxic or non-toxic gases.

30. The question raised in the draft resolution submitted by Poland and the Ukrainian SSR (A/C.1/L.377) was equally important and urgent. A ban on flights of aircraft carrying nuclear weapons across national frontiers would greatly reduce the possibility of accidents such as that which had occurred off the Spanish coast in January 1966, and would protect the human environment from radio-active contamination. Radio-active substances had been released from at least one of the four bombs carried by the United States bomber which had crashed there.

31. The United States practice of overflying the territories of other States with aircraft carrying nuclear weapons was a violation of the generally accepted principles of international law and of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow on 5 August 1963, in which the contracting parties expressed their desire to put an end to the contamination of man's environment by radio-active substances. Until such flights were prohibited, further accidents—with all their grave consequences for world peace—might occur in any part of the world, not only in areas where the United States and its allies had military bases.

32. His delegation also supported draft resolution A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/Add.2. The preparation and distribution of a concise report on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons would be particularly useful in countries which were not yet fully aware of the consequences of a possible nuclear war.

33. Mr. ESCHAUZIER (Netherlands) said that the main obstacle to progress in general and complete disarmament was still the difference of views on the manner in which nuclear armaments were to be reduced and eventually eliminated. That issue was closely linked with the idea of a minimum deterrent or "nuclear umbrella". His delegation hoped that agreement would soon be reached on the terms of reference of a working group to examine the function of a "nuclear umbrella" in the context of disarmament, and the composition, phasing and other aspects of such a deterrent. He supported the suggestion

made by the Swedish delegation to the Eighteen-Nation Committee that the study should begin with the problems arising during the third and last stage of general and complete disarmament. Other aspects of general and complete disarmament should, of course, also be kept under active consideration, in particular measures guaranteeing mutual security not only during the disarmament process but after its completion.

34. Despite the universal recognition that disarmament was essential to the security and survival of mankind, its attainment remained as remote as ever. It became increasingly important to promote a better understanding of the essential elements of the disarmament problem, particularly the nuclear arms race. The vast amount of literature on individual aspects of the problem tended to cloud rather than clarify the central issues, and his delegation had therefore joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/L.370/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1/Corr.1 and Rev.1/Add.2, which was aimed at the preparation of a concise report on a judiciously selected group of questions. The best service the report could render would be to show convincingly that the possession of nuclear weapons did not automatically increase national security and that an increase in their numbers or their degree of sophistication would not promote international stability. He hoped that the report would also aid in understanding the advantages of non-proliferation, of containing and reversing the arms race, and of international security arrangements.

35. Mr. CSATORDAY (Hungary), replying to the United Kingdom representative, said that the fascist Government of Hungary between the two World Wars had not acceded to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 because it had not wished in any way to impede the actions of the fascist Governments of Italy and Germany. However, the socialist Government of Hungary had acceded to the Protocol in 1952 and thereby had demonstrated its belief that the principles laid down in the Protocol were still valid and should be observed by all countries. That belief had been further confirmed by the accession to the Protocol of a number of newly independent countries, notably Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. In introducing draft resolution A/C.1/L.374, his delegation had been chiefly concerned not with the problems of the so-called cold war, but with the fact that a hot war was currently going on and that it was the duty of all Members of the United Nations to seek to end that war and prevent any danger of war in the future.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.