Chairman: Mr. Franz MATSCH (Austria).

AGENDA ITEM 70


GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.1/L.234) (continued)

1. Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon) emphasized that the problem of disarmament was a matter of extreme urgency which had to be settled by the Powers primarily concerned and by the United Nations without delay. Lebanon therefore welcomed the proposals submitted by the USSR (A/4219) and the United Kingdom (A/C.1/820), and agreed that detailed consideration of them could best be undertaken by the ten-Power Disarmament Committee. The four great Powers seemed in general agreement on the need for the widest possible measure of disarmament and for strict international control and enforcement of any disarmament agreement. They further accepted the principle that disarmament should be carried out in carefully determined stages. They appeared to be of one mind regarding the controlled cessation of nuclear weapons tests and the adoption of measures to prevent surprise attacks. They also endorsed the principle that the resources made available as a result of disarmament should be diverted for peaceful purposes and, in particular, for economic assistance to under-developed countries. Lastly, they recognized that the United Nations retained primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and should become an effective instrument for the prevention of war.

2. It was evident from the statements of their representatives that all four great Powers desired effectively controlled disarmament. They differed only on the details of the system of control which would apply to each stage in every process of the process of disarmament. The Lebanese delegation was convinced that that technical question could be resolved once agreement was reached on well-defined aims. The differences between the Soviet and United Kingdom plans were not fundamental. In any plan for disarmament by stages, the parties should abide by the principle of maintaining a proper balance between them so that at no point should any one party gain a military advantage as a result of the disarmament measures adopted. They should strive to ensure that all parties were equally capable of defending themselves at every stage. Such equality would create the mutual confidence which should accompany the gradual reduction of armaments.

3. In the long run, the best way of building up confidence was to make the United Nations an effective instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Organization should be strengthened so that it could discharge that responsibility, free from pressures exerted by any Power or group of Powers. It was more important than ever that all nations, and particularly the small and medium-sized nations, should prove that the United Nations was truly impartial and that its collective judgements would be governed only by the principles of its Charter.

4. The political problems involved in any agreement on general disarmament could be solved if the great Powers were willing to reconcile their political aims and interests so as to arrive at a realistic and mutually acceptable plan for controlled disarmament. They must not fail in their responsibility towards mankind. The means could be found if the end was sought with firmness and determination. As a small nation, Lebanon could only wish the great Powers success in their negotiations and express the hope that an effective agreement would be reached, and that the human and material resources that would thus be saved would be used to provide a better life for all peoples.

5. Mr. LOPEZ (Philippines) said that the joint presentation of the draft resolution on general and complete disarmament (A/C.1/L.234) by the Soviet Union and the United States, and its endorsement by the other eighty Member States, had brought the political temperature of the United Nations down to its lowest level in fourteen years of debate on disarmament. It must be regarded as one of the great initiatives in the history of the world. Yet it was precisely because it had been taken in an unaccustomed atmosphere of relaxation of tension that all nations should place themselves on guard against the dangers of wishful thinking as well as the dangers of a barren cynicism.

6. While the dramatic concurrence of the world's greatest Powers on the most crucial problem of the modern world gave promise of inestimable benefits for all peoples, and they had great need to be sustained by that hope, it would be dangerous to encourage the illusion that approval of the draft resolution was a guarantee of ultimate agreement on the details of a disarmament plan. It should be recognized that, while the difficulties were many and stubborn, they could eventually be overcome by good will, mutual confidence and determination. It would be even more dangerous, on the other hand, to dismiss that unprecedented concurrence as another lost cause in the United Nations, and the proposals for general and complete disarmament as too good to be true. With the peril of total war so close, all States were under the obligation to treat with special care any proposal, however radical it might appear, which sought a rapid end to the arms race under effective international control.

7. As a small nation which had known war in an area of the world likely to continue to be directly affected...
by the rivalries between powerful States, and which hoped to have a share in the economic benefits resulting from disarmament, the Philippines had an important stake in the realization of comprehensive disarmament. It hoped that the nations which would soon be negotiating at Geneva would prove worthy of the trust placed in them.

8. Mr. SULAIMAN (Iraq), emphasizing that no nation, however small, could escape the tragic consequences of modern war, said that Iraq, as a small, under-developed country, could not achieve its objective of a better life for its people unless world peace became secure. Consequently, it had been gratified to note, now that the myth that peace could be preserved through a balance of power, military alliances and an arms race had been discredited, that the international atmosphere had greatly improved and that positive steps had been initiated towards a solution of the disarmament problem. It had been encouraged by the progress achieved in the discussions relating to the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, by the agreements between the great Powers on a number of other important points and by their decision to resume negotiations in the ten-Power Disarmament Committee. Iraq had voted to keep the United Nations Disarmament Commission in existence on the understanding that there would be a firm link between the ten-Power Disarmament Committee and the United Nations, which bore primary responsibility for disarmament. It welcomed the Soviet proposal for general and complete disarmament as a positive step forward. Indeed, it was evident that all the parties concerned were convinced of the desirability and necessity of achieving that objective.

9. Since all parties had also agreed that an efficient system of control must go hand in hand with disarmament at all its stages, it was for the ten-Power Disarmament Committee to examine and ultimately reconcile the differences of opinion regarding the degree or type of control to be exercised at each stage. In the circumstances, the General Assembly could do no more than adopt the draft resolution before the Committee. His delegation hoped that, along with the negotiations in the ten-Power Committee, the talks on the suspension of nuclear tests and the prevention of surprise attack would be continued, and that the United Nations would maintain its interest and continue its efforts in the field of disarmament. Since the draft resolution reaffirmed the primary responsibility of the Organization in that field, Iraq had been pleased to add its name to those of the co-sponsors.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.