AGENDA ITEM 70


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

1. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Nehru, had stated that it was the language of war that was used to promote the cause of peace and that the desire for peace, though well-nigh universal, was influenced by some of the very factors that threatened civilization with a holocaust. It was against such a background that his delegation viewed the disarmament question.

2. For two years there had been no discussion of disarmament in the organs of the United Nations proper. It would, however, be mistaken to contend that only some Powers were responsible for disarmament or the maintenance of peace. The use of direct negotiation did prove the need for results was realized. The First Committee was not now, however, considering the result of the Geneva discussions, but an item placed on the agenda at the request of the Soviet delegation (A/4218). Accordingly, old controversies must be avoided, and it must be borne in mind that the item had new elements in it. The ideal of a warless world had always existed and, to consider only recent years, specific proposals on the subject had been made and the President of the United States, Mr. Eisenhower, and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Khrushchev, had made many statements on the subject. There could be no doubt, as President Eisenhower had said at the Conference of the Heads of Government of the four great Powers, held at Geneva in 1955, that the peoples' common desire for peace was a powerful force in the world and one to which all political leaders were beginning to respond. Similarly, Mr. Khrushchev had said before the General Assembly (799th plenary meeting) that the peoples were thirsting for peace. That was an aspect of the question that was too often neglected.

3. Earlier attempts to prevent war had failed because they had been based on the principle of the balance of power and self-defence which had even now been invoked as a result of an erroneous interpretation of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. War could not be used for establishing peace. Self-defence would operate only in an armed world where nations were living in temporary peace as a result of some kind of uncomfortable agreement. It was now realized that, if another war occurred, peace discussions could never be opened again. Accordingly, the desired objective was not the balanced limitation of armaments. The balanced limitation of armaments was only a means towards total disarmament as real peace could only come about in a world in which there existed no national armed forces for so-called national security. Such an idea was not new. It had been repeated many times, as for instance, in 1841 by Sir Robert Peel, a British Conservative Prime Minister; in 1932 by Lord Grey, who had been Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the time of the declaration of the First World War; and on 24 April 1952 by the representative of the United States in Committee I of the Disarmament Commission.\(^1\) Many resolutions on the subject had been submitted by the Indian delegation, which had also made an appeal in that connexion at the commemorative session at San Francisco.\(^2\)

4. It was heartening that the First Committee should be studying a draft resolution sponsored by all States Members of the United Nations. It was, however, to be feared that, when everybody sponsored a draft resolution, it might turn out to be nobody's business. In 1957, the Assembly had unanimously adopted resolution 1011 (X) and that had been followed by no progress in the Disarmament Commission. The Indian delegation viewed the present draft resolution (A/C.1/L.234), on the one hand, as an indication of the anxiety felt by Governments in regard to the problem, and on the other, as an encouraging sign for the work of the ten-Power disarmament committee and for a future understanding between the two main Powers concerned and their friends on either side. In addition, the idea of recommending that the records of debates on the subject in the First Committee should be transmitted to the ten-Power committee showed that world Governments, large and small, had become very concerned. Moreover, it must be remembered that since the establishment of the United Nations many similar recommendations had been made which had remained without effect and several years had been required for the proposals submitted to the First Committee to be considered in a practical way. It had, moreover, taken two years for the Disarmament Commission to find out that there were procedural difficulties preventing India from submitting its proposals.

5. The main problem, as the representative of Greece had pointed out (1030th meeting), was the problem of national security. So long as that problem was considered as an exclusive or well-nigh exclusive national...
concern, armaments would have to be maintained and increased, which finally led to war. A feeling of insecurity might also arise as a result of the idea entertained by some countries that they were superior to others and hence destined to dominate them. A similar feeling arose from the fact that nationalism had often overshadowed its national frontiers. Thus imperialism and colonialism were the cause of wars. The need to protect distant territories induced some countries to increase their armaments more and more. There were also ideological conflicts which had always existed and which were to a large extent propaganda instruments used by those who wanted mass support for certain ideas or interests. There was at present a tendency to attach too much importance to ideological conflicts. Lastly, there were economic conflicts which were formerly regarded as arising out of the belief that a part of the world should remain poor if the other part was to prosper. Indeed there was reason for congratulation at least that war was no longer considered as necessary for the development of the individual, as Mussolini had apparently thought. All causes of war must be eliminated if lasting peace was to be established. Security must not be a purely national affair. There must be no more expansionism. There could be no real peace so long as it was believed that peace could be established by means of war.

6. For the Indian delegation, general and complete disarmament meant a world without war where armaments could be abandoned altogether. That called for a degree of relative economic equality between peoples. Countries must also be prevented from using their resources to arm other countries which required arms, not for their own defense, but only for alliances and other similar purposes, as such alliances threatened the security of other countries. The idea of respectable weapons, as for instance the "clean bomb," must also be dropped. What was needed was a change of climate so that war would no longer be considered an instrument of policy. If countries kept their arms, war might always break out voluntarily or involuntarily, perhaps even by the falsification of a telegram as in the case of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Although the Soviet proposal (A/4219) had been branded as lacking in realism, it did tend towards the establishment of the required climate of peace.

7. The United Kingdom plan (A/C.1/380) provided for three stages and could do no more than make a start at disarmament. In the first stage, under provision (g), specific quantities of designated types of armaments would be handed over to the custody of an international control organization. It did not appear that such a step would be desirable or that it would serve a useful purpose. With regard to the question of outer space, it was to be hoped that the study of that problem, however necessary it might be, would not hold up progress on the first stage.

8. He had listened with keen interest to the suggestions made by Mr. Moch on behalf of France (A/C.1/ 621). On second thought, however, it did not seem to him that the danger of an atomic war would be removed merely by abolishing the terrifying vehicles for the delivery of nuclear devices since weapons of mass destruction might just as well be carried by ordinary aircraft. It was also essential to abolish the bases and the weapons themselves.

9. With regard to the USSR proposal, he was sure that general and complete disarmament was the only real solution. The only choice was between general and complete disarmament, which would free the world from the fear of war, and limited disarmament which would inevitably lead to the kind of rearmament which the world had experienced after the two world wars.

10. Disarmament clearly implied the need for inspection and control, but India, for its part, had always regarded as futile any argument on the order of priority to be established between disarmament and control. That was why some years previously his delegation had proposed that the Secretariat might draft the blueprint of a disarmament treaty so that discussions would relate to specific problems.

11. So far as the economic consequences of complete and final disarmament were concerned, it did not appear that the switch to peaceful activities of the labour force at present engaged in armaments manufacture should present any greater difficulty than had demobilization after the Second World War. The reduction in the military strength of the United States, the USSR, the United Kingdom and France between 1945 and 1950 had a significant bearing on the question.

12. With regard to the three questions asked by the United States representative at the 1027th meeting, he would point out that the Indian Government, for its part, was totally opposed to the formation of an international police force made up of national units. First, such a police force would have to be at least as powerful as all the national armies combined, and the national units would be tempted to intervene in the internal affairs of individual nations. Moreover, such a body would be impracticable because of the rivalries and difficulties to which such questions as its command and its employment when there was no dispute in the world would give rise. Moreover, the maintenance of an international peace force would be extremely costly in relation to the present United Nations budget.

13. The international law which would govern the use of an international force would have to be above the national laws of various countries. It would therefore have to be accepted equally by all: that was not the case in Gaza, nor had it been so in Korea.

14. With regard to the internal security forces which would be needed in the various countries in a disarmed world, it should be recognized that the present national armies were required, not to maintain internal order, but to occupy thousands of square kilometres which, by some strange logic, were considered to be part of the territory of the mother country. His delegation considered that if the purpose of security forces was to maintain internal order in a country against the wishes of the people, then they could no longer be called security forces. India would not accept the principle of a police State.

15. His delegation was pleased to see the establishment on a basis of parity of the ten-Power committee which was going to study the question of disarmament, particularly as, in the past, it had repeatedly stated that direct talks between the United States and the USSR was the only way which would lead to fruitful negotiations. The Assembly should leave it to the committee to arrange its own procedures and draw up its own programme of work since it would be wrong to place any impediments in its way.

16. What was needed was the creation of a climate in which public opinion would realize that the only
chance of survival was the establishment of a world free of war. He hoped that the ten-Power committee would function under the "umbrella" of the summit and that there would be a summit meeting whenever the ten-Power committee faced a serious deadlock. With respect to the steps to be taken to prevent any violation of an eventual agreement, it might be possible to use the method followed at the Nuremberg trials as a guide and make the individual violator subject to penalties under the national laws of his own country or to trial before an international tribunal. A treaty could be concluded for that purpose. Such a system could be justified because a crime against humanity was perpetrated not by a nation in the abstract, but by men. The fact that any person breaking the laws of humanity, which would be laid down by treaty and sanctioned by the United Nations, would be liable to a penalty might make it possible to prevent violations.

17. The principle of secrecy and the spreading of erroneous scientific information to deceive a potential enemy were against the laws of civilization and contributed to the atmosphere of suspicion, and every effort should be made to oppose them. The ten-Power committee should also keep the various Governments of the world informed of developments in the course of its negotiations. Furthermore, the advanced countries should be forbidden to export capital equipment and to send technicians to establish armament factories in countries in which an armament industry did not exist.

18. Finally, since armaments research absorbs enormous sums, was there not good reason to organize research in the interests of peace as well? The Disarmament Commission could be asked to consider that question with the assistance both of the many scientists who had often expressed their views on armaments questions and of the principal statesmen. The scientists, who would become international civil servants and would therefore be independent of Governments, would endeavour to solve, in the interests of peace, the problems to which the use of technical methods for military ends gave rise.

19. The United Nations, whose main purpose was to rid the world of the scourge of war, should undertake intensive research into the subject of the settlement of disputes.

20. It was to be hoped that those representatives who sat on the ten-Power committee would realize that, in addition to loyalty towards a nation, there was also a much wider loyalty towards the idea of peace. It was essential to support the resolution submitted by the eighty-two Members of the United Nations, which should be the charter of the committee.

21. His delegation suggested that the United Nations Disarmament Commission should meet towards the middle of the year in order to keep in touch with the ten-Power committee's work and to give it any encouragement needed. It would not be a matter of calling together the permanent representatives at a moment's notice, but rather of holding a meeting at the Government level after the difficulties had been studied in the chancelleries; it would be a real disarmament conference composed of spokesmen of the peoples and not of statesmen expressing their own ideas.

22. Those were his delegation's suggestions. For thousands of years men had talked of turning their weapons into ploughshares but, if they did not turn them into instruments of peace now, they would no longer be there to turn them into anything.

23. Mr. Kuznetsov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stressed the interest shown by most delegations in the Soviet proposals for general and complete disarmament. The general debate had confirmed the fact that all the prerequisites for its implementation were present. It had been pointed out that the settlement of the disarmament problem was a matter of extreme urgency in the age of atomic energy, rockets and electronics, an age when scientific progress was making it possible to produce increasingly destructive weapons which might at any moment be put into action as the result of an error of judgement or technical error. In those circumstances, the Soviet proposals, which suggested the most reliable way of achieving a positive result, were particularly timely, and it was not surprising that they had been welcomed by an overwhelming majority of delegations. It was very gratifying to note that all the Members of the United Nations had decided to be included among the sponsors of the draft resolution prepared by the delegations of the Soviet Union and the United States in a spirit of business-like co-operation which gave ground for satisfaction. Consequently, his delegation expected that the USSR proposals would be taken as a basis for the work of the ten-Power disarmament committee.

24. Unfortunately, some representatives, while professing themselves in favour of complete disarmament, were trying to undermine the idea and to cast doubt on the possibilities of putting the Soviet plan into effect. Those who were sincerely in favour of disarmament should prevent others from obstructing the adoption of specific measures of disarmament.

25. It was known that the Soviet Union had already proposed far-reaching disarmament measures in the period between the two wars. Those proposals had been rejected on the grounds that they would be of benefit solely to the USSR, the only socialist State, which at that time had still been weak. Their adoption, however, would have prevented the Second World War. Now the Soviet Union was submitting further disarmament proposals adapted to the present situation. But it was no longer weak or isolated: it ranked among the great Powers and was no longer alone in the socialist camp. No one could pretend that those proposals were dictated by weakness.

26. It was in fact clear that the proposals were dictated by humanitarian considerations. Nations and entire peoples were supporting the idea of general and complete disarmament. The weapons created by man could be destroyed by man. Such was the conviction of the Soviet Government and people, as expressed in the appeal addressed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 31 October 1959 to the parliaments of all countries of the world.

27. The Soviet plan was in no sense a propaganda manoeuvre, despite certain allegations to that effect. Life itself demanded that States which had differing social systems should learn to settle their problems by negotiation. The socialist States acted on the Leninist principle that coexistence was an objective necessity. From the very nature of their social system, the socialist States were the most resolute and persistent champions of peace. The entire policy was inspired by their concern to ensure the welfare of their peoples. Peaceful coexistence implied recognition of the existence of various social systems, the right of self-
determination for every nation, respect for the sovereignty of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs. Those principles were more and more widely recognized and, thanks to the efforts of peace-loving states, international tension had been considerably reduced, particularly since Mr. Khrushchev’s visit to the United States.

28. At its recent session, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had devoted special attention to the problem of control. In that connexion, Mr. Khrushchev had pointed out that in the Western countries certain statesmen were undermining the faith of the peoples in the genuineness of the Soviet proposals and were distorting the Soviet proposals for control, which called for an appropriate stage of control at every stage of disarmament. He had also said that the Soviet Union would agree to the establishment of appropriate agencies under the aegis of the United Nations to ensure that all States observed the obligations which they had assumed. It was a fact that many delegations on the First Committee had stressed the common elements in the Soviet and Western plans, particularly with regard to control. Now that the idea of general and complete disarmament had been accepted, a system of specific measures accompanied by effective international control could be worked out. There were certainly other questions, such as that of internal security forces, which would still require careful study before an agreement thereon was reached between States, but the raising of secondary questions in order to distract attention from the main point at issue must be avoided. Moreover, as Mr. Khrushchev had said before the Supreme Soviet on 31 October 1959, if disarmament could be achieved, the moral forces of the world would be strong enough for the United Nations to take measures and impose sanctions against any country that might start a conflict.

29. The various suggestions which had been made, particularly that of India, should be examined with care. If the Western Powers did not find it possible to accept general and complete disarmament, the Soviet Union was prepared to consider partial measures and more especially the prohibition of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons tests, the establishment of a control and inspection zone and reduction of the troops in the territories of various European countries, the establishment of an "atom-free" zone in central Europe, the abolition of foreign military bases and the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the member States of NATO and the member States of the Warsaw Treaty. But only general and complete disarmament provided a radical solution to the problem. That was why, by adopting a resolution approving that principle and calling upon Governments to make every effort to achieve a constructive solution, the United Nations was making an important step towards the abolition of war, although that was as yet merely a beginning. It was permissible to hope that all difficulties would be overcome and that practical measures would be adopted and enforced in such a manner as to settle the most urgent problem of modern times. The Soviet Union would spare no effort to achieve that goal.

30. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) noted that Mr. Kuznetsov had stated that he expected that the USSR proposals would be taken as a basis for the work of the ten-Power disarmament committee. The draft resolution before the First Committee mentioned the declaration of the United Kingdom of 17 September 1959 (798th plenary meeting), and the declaration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 18 September 1959 (799th plenary meeting), and the other proposals or suggestions made. It was accordingly plain that the new ten-Power disarmament committee had been asked to give thorough consideration to all pertinent proposals. Moreover the United States had under way a new and thorough review of the problem in the light of present-day technology, which would prepare it to participate constructively in the work of the ten-Power committee and perhaps to put forward proposals of its own. Finally the discussions in the First Committee and the conversations which had led to the preparation of the joint draft resolution had shown a spirit of mutual co-operation and mutual accommodation which was indispensable to progress towards solution of the problem. He hoped that the Soviet representative’s remarks did not mean that the Soviet Union would insist that its point of view must form the basis of the discussions in the ten-Power committee.

31. Referring to the remark that the socialist States were the champions of peace, he pointed out that the social achievements of the United States could match anything that was being done in other countries. In any case, he would deny that the Soviet Union was any more resolutely or more persistently a champion of peace than the United States, which had proved its devotion to the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations.

32. The CHAIRMAN, noting the enthusiastic support given by all members of the Committee to the draft resolution sponsored by the eighty-two States Members of the Organization (A/C.1/L.234), proposed that it should be considered as adopted unanimously.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.