Chairman: Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon).

AGENDA ITEMS 67, 86, 69 AND 73


Suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests (A/4414, A/C.1/L.252/Rev.1) (continued)

Prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons (A/4434, A/C.1/L.252/Rev.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that despite the large number of meetings devoted during the past ten years to the vitally important problem of disarmament, no solution had yet been found. The reason was that both sides had always taken care to include in their proposals some point which the other side would find unacceptable. When their views seemed to be drawing together, it was because one of those unacceptable conditions had been discarded—unfortunately only to be replaced by another before long. The time had come to renounce empty forms of words which merely covered up differences. Moreover, in view of the change that had taken place in the nature of the world—a new approach was needed.

2. The Indian delegation would study three particular points: the objectives in view, i.e. what was meant by "general and complete disarmament"; the changes which had taken place in instruments of war and the numbers of people affected; and the role of the United Nations and of the smaller Powers. The last point was important: in the first place, the Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva had reached a deadlock, and in the second place, disarmament was a matter which affected all countries in the world not only in the remote future but even during the process of making an agreement, for the old-fashioned idea of collective security must be renounced and the fact accepted that nowadays the security of each country must be guaranteed by the whole world, each State abandoning its own means of defence. Moreover, no country could escape the effects of modern weapons.

3. The Disarmament Commission itself had functioned merely as a post office, transmitting to the General Assembly the reports of other organs in which negotiations had never met with any success. It was, essential, therefore, that the Assembly should issue directives on what was to be done and the machinery for doing it. It should also deal with other matters, such as the economic and social consequences of disarmament, even though that might appear somewhat premature.

4. War was as old as the world. However, civilized man could no longer regard it as inevitable. The human race had been able to survive the wars of the past, but modern ingenuity would not allow it to survive future wars: either man would abolish war or war would abolish man. If peace was to triumph, there must be a new conception of international relations, no longer based on the principle that might was right but on arbitration in accordance with the great principles of law.

5. Since the beginning of the century the nations had been trying to agree on a system for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Yet two world wars had broken out. The peaceful settlement of disputes presupposed arbitration and collective security; nowadays, however, collective security could no longer be based on the possession of military might, which could at most guarantee some degree of equilibrium. At the present time, the only alternatives available were the law of the jungle and the establishment of an international force to enforce arbitration and safeguard the maintenance of international order.

6. There was a general tendency to judge a draft resolution in the light not of its contents, but of the country or group of countries submitting it. He recalled the various resolutions that the General Assembly had adopted on disarmament. There had been discussions, technical and otherwise, in several bodies. Finally, the Assembly had adopted resolution 1376 (XIV), which defined an objective, namely, general and complete disarmament, and called upon Governments to make every effort to achieve that end. Before ways and means could be considered, the aim in view must be clear. The objective was not simply to reduce armaments, or even do away with them. According to the Charter of the United Nations,
the objective was to create a world in which there was no war. The United Kingdom representative had been perfectly right to stress (1089th meeting) the futility of war waged with nuclear weapons, no matter who was the victor. However, that trend of thought should be pursued to its logical conclusion; it was not a balanced reduction of armaments which should be sought, but general and complete disarmament, a situation in which war would become impossible and would be outlawed as a means of settling disputes. A revolutionary outlook was needed, for the present situation was entirely different from anything the world had ever known. The armaments race was no longer a competition between one country and another; each country was competing with itself, for the fear that one weapon would be less effective than another impelled the search for ever more elaborate weapons. The weapons in operation at the beginning of a war were soon replaced by others as the fight went on. The resolutions adopted since 1952 had envisaged the reduction of armaments to a level at which they would no longer threaten the peace of the world; but nowadays there was no such level. They must be completely abolished, save for the quantities necessary to safeguard civilian order and security.

7. The reasons for which States had amassed armaments, in the course of history, were: considerations of national security, considerations of prestige, ambitions of colonial expansion, conflicts of ideology and, lastly, economic considerations. At the present time, the possibility of using force for colonial expansion was fortunately becoming increasingly limited. So far as ideologies were concerned, even the most fanatical were gradually coming to understand that coexistence was essential, and that men must agree to differ. Thus, the reasons for retaining instruments of war on ideological grounds were also disappearing. As for economic difficulties and crises, it was becoming increasingly apparent that it was not worth starting a war in order to overcome them.

8. Considerations of national security remained: that was the real cause of the accumulation of armaments and the maintenance of armed forces. That was a fact which must be borne in mind. It was generally considered that national security could be guaranteed only if there was a balance of power. But the balance of power was an unstable equilibrium, in which each side sought to come out on top. What was needed today was the establishment of a community in which co-operation and not power would be the essential factor: the British statesman, Sir Robert Peel, had said more than a century ago that the time had come to reduce military armaments, which belonged to a state of war rather than of peace. As early as 1922, Lord Grey had said that armaments were no protection against war but only a possible protection against defeat. And in June 1958 the American physicist William C. Davison had said before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the United States Congress that it was the absence of progress toward disarmament which led to the belief that security could be achieved only by having control of more destructive weapons, and that as a result the world situation was spiralling downwards towards destruction.

9. Turning to the question of nuclear weapons testing, he pointed out that the cessation of test explosions could not be regarded as an disarmament measure; it was a measure for the control of a certain type of weapon—but it was nevertheless a demonstration of the spirit of co-operation, and it would promote trust. It would be necessary to ascertain exactly what points the three nuclear Powers had not yet been able to agree on. Generally speaking, the Indian delegation was in favour of the sentiments expressed in the draft resolution submitted by Poland (A/C.1/L.252/Rev.1), but it did not think that it would be wise to provide for a special session of the General Assembly, for the progress which had already been made at Geneva gave grounds for hoping that an agreement would soon be reached. However, the Indian Government could not accept the position which both sides seemed to have adopted in favour of continuing underground explosions.

10. Although no system of control or inspection could be perfect, it was nevertheless possible to do away with the danger from radiation, and to reverse the process of nuclear disarmament. The world was faced with a great danger in the fact that more and more countries were or would shortly be in a position to manufacture nuclear weapons, and that a sovereign State could not be prevented from producing such weapons as long as it was not bound to refrain from doing so under an international agreement. That was what had happened in the case of France. Moreover, it was now possible to produce smaller and smaller bombs, and thanks to the recent discovery of a German scientist fissionable materials would soon be obtainable at relatively low cost. It was to be feared, therefore, that the possession of such bombs might spread rapidly, and that, for example, the colonial Powers might use them to keep hold of their colonies. Since the United States and the Soviet Union would probably not wish to provoke a world war because of acts of that kind, nuclear weapons might well become conventional weapons. It was essential, therefore, to prohibit the production and utilization of nuclear weapons and to destroy existing stocks. An agreement to that effect would also remove the atomic isolation that France had spoken of, which simply increased the danger. For all those reasons, the Indian delegation would support any draft resolution designed to prevent the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons.

11. An attempt had to be made to halt the armaments race, partly by establishing arms control, so as to prevent the area of potential war from extending to the colonial and ex-colonial areas. In that connexion, his Government wished to appeal to the new independent countries not to allow their territories to be used in that way. The arms truce could be given effect in various ways. One way would be to prohibit nuclear tests and abstain from spreading nuclear weapons. Another would be for the great Powers to agree not to develop their weapons further, pending the conclusion of a general agreement. In addition, it would be desirable for the great Powers to cease concluding military pacts and refrain from extending the pact apparatus into the uncommitted areas. Further, as several Member States, including Ghana, had proposed, Africa should be treated as a zone free from

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the employment of atomic weapons. Likewise, as the representative of Cambodia had suggested, part of Asia should be a zone free from the operations of the cold war. Similarly, the Indian delegation supported the proposals put forward by Poland concerning the establishment of a free zone in Europe which could not be used as a base of operations. The creation of zones of that kind would help to create a climate of peace. In the present situation, the only way to reduce tension was to take positive measures to halt or at least slow down the armaments race, in particular by ceasing nuclear tests, abolishing at least some of the bases, and preventing the projection of the war apparatus into the uncommitted areas.

12. There would have to be a new look at the concept of general and complete disarmament. A mere balanced reduction of armaments would not be sufficient to save the world from catastrophe, and it would not be enough to agree only on partial measures, with the final details to be decided after the agreement. He believed that the Member States, particularly the great Powers, should pledge themselves in a refrain to a disarmed world, a world without war and in which war would no longer be possible. That commitment should, at the same time, guarantee that the first phase of disarmament should be sufficiently far-reaching to create confidence. It was equally clear that no implementation of disarmament would be possible without a full machinery of inspection and control, while it was recognized that no such system could ever be absolutely perfect. The agreement would also have to include arrangements which would avoid the possibility of surprise attacks, so as to increase the confidence of the parties. It would seem that it should be possible to implement those disarmament measures within a few years; and it should not be necessary to wait until inspectors had been specially trained, for the specialized personnel already serving in armies, administrations and laboratories could be used for the purpose.

13. In giving its directives, he believed that the General Assembly should recall its resolution 1373 (XIV), under which the Member States pledged themselves unconditionally to eliminate war and should call for steps to be taken to put an end to the armaments race. In accordance with the resolution adopted by the Disarmament Commission on 18 August 1960 (DC/183/Corr.1) it should also stress the urgency of achieving general and complete disarmament; for in four or five years its achievement might well be impossible. It must also be borne in mind that in past negotiations there had been certain areas of agreement before deadlock had been reached; and the parties concerned should be encouraged to take advantage of those areas of agreement and add to them whatever was required for implementation. Pending an agreement on disarmament, there should be complete prohibition of the manufacture and use of weapons of mass destruction. The Assembly should also give directives on inspection and control, to enable the parties to break the deadlock. In that connexion, it was clear that inspection and control could only come after it had been decided what was to be controlled and what was to be inspected; but armaments could not be destroyed until their destruction could be inspected. While an agreement on disarmament need not necessarily await the completion of the inspection machinery, there could be no implementation without full control which would ensure not only that armaments had been reduced or removed, but that they had not been replaced by others. The parties had in any event agreed that no phase of the discussions should give a military advantage to one side or the other, and that control should apply to every stage. Lastly, whatever arrangements were used for negotiations, a report on the implementation of those directives should be made to the Disarmament Commission at an early date.

14. Member States should pledge themselves not to launch or prepare for surprise attack on other countries. Besides that, in a disarmed world there had to be provision for maintaining international security. That could not take place through the retention of national armies; there would have to be police forces, and that required considerable organization.

15. It was a mistake to argue that disarmament would enable countries to save money which could be spent in assisting under-developed countries. Governments actually raised money for particular purposes, and if they did not want it for arms, they would not raise it. Moreover, world disarmament and the outlawing of war would perhaps cost more, in terms of expenditure and effort, for it would mean considerably increasing the numbers of technicians, engineers and administrators, converting existing arms plants and finding employment for the people now working on armaments manufacture. No useful purpose would be served therefore, at the current session, by making illusory statements in the belief that the underprivileged peoples of the world would be better off or that national budgets would immediately be reduced. Nevertheless, the expenditure would be worth while, since it would be expenditure for peace and not for war.

16. Further, it should not be believed that frightening people would bring about disarmament; for the more afraid a nation was, the more it armed and prepared for war. The theory of the deterrent was out of date; the accumulation of weapons for that purpose in fact increased the danger of war, because it increased the risk of accident, and an accident could start a war by mistake.

17. For all those reasons, the United Nations should address itself to the question with great urgency, the more so since it must be able to meet its responsibilities. Its functions must expand with time. For the first time in history, a United Nations force was in the territory of a country which was not in dispute with any other country. That evolution of the Organization was a healthy development. It corresponded to the evolution of political and geographical factors and to the aspirations of the peoples. In that respect there would have to be certain changes. In particular, the Security Council, which was required to protect all nations, great and small, would have to be enlarged; he hoped that no country would object to that.

18. The draft resolution submitted by Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/C.1/L.250) spoke of an international disarmament organization and international peace-keeping machinery within the United Nations. Within the United Nations, the only organ responsible for the security of States was the Security Council. The fact that that organ operated under what was commonly called the veto was a good thing; in fact, the veto was the principle of greater-Power unanimity, and was a guarantee of security for the small nations.
19. The Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.249) also provided for the establishment of an international control organization under the United Nations, and for an undertaking by States to make available to the Security Council units from the contingents of police retained by them. It seemed, therefore, that there would be no difficulties in that respect.

20. But today the fate of all mankind was at stake, and the smaller nations also had a very important part to play. The number of uncommitted States was increasing, and all the countries which had just gained their independence had said that they did not want the spectre of the cold war on their territory.

21. In order to break the current deadlock, the negotiations must somehow or other be resumed, whether outside or inside the United Nations. However, if it was the desire of the parties to draw into the negotiations countries which were not directly concerned, it had to be assured that certain principles would have to be observed. First, they must be countries which were not directly or indirectly committed to one of the great Power blocs. Secondly, they ought to have had a certain amount of experience in the question and to have taken part in the discussion of the disarmament problem over the last few years. They must also have a tradition of courage and impartiality, and be capable of acting according to their own convictions. Finally, they would have to command the confidence of both sides, so as to be able if necessary to act as mediators. They might perhaps be able to act as witnesses to the bilateral conversations.

22. He had deliberately refrained from going into details of the machinery of negotiation. Once the purpose was clear and the directives known, all the smaller difficulties should disappear. The main objective must be, not to encourage the cold war, but to establish a new political theory of a new international law. The point was that no country, no government, no major power could stand up to a programme of nuclear arms disengaged from the whole international situation. He had believed that carrying on the disarmament negotiations was the only way to achieve progress. The difficulty was the pace at which the negotiations should proceed. He still believed in a general disarmament plan, but it must be in line with the political principles that had been established by the United Nations.

23. The essential thing was not the adoption of resolutions, even by overwhelming majorities; what was required was an agreement between the interested parties, which alone could make a solution possible.

24. The proposal contained in the United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C.1/L.231) that technical experts should be appointed to study systems of inspection and control might well be justified, but it should be remembered that the decision to be taken was a political one and that the setting up of a technical committee was no substitute for a political decision. The decision must be to disarm completely, so that war would be impossible anywhere in the world. Disarmament should take place in phases and within a time-limit fixed in advance, and at no phase should either side acquire any advantage.

25. The Indian Government considered that a break in negotiations would be catastrophic, because to resume them would create new problems and might even necessitate starting again from the beginning.

26. Negotiations should continue at any cost. It was for that reason that five Heads of State or Heads of Government had submitted to the General Assembly a draft resolution (A/L.317) which, while it had gained a majority, had unfortunately not gained the necessary support.

27. There must be some kind of understanding. The Indian delegation disagreed with the practice of submitting draft resolutions before the debate had even begun. They should come after the discussion, not before it.

28. Mr. BERARD (France) said that since the French delegation found the general trend of the debate unsatisfactory, it did not wish to take a full part in it, but only to outline its Government's views.

29. Those views were well known. Over the past year they had been set forth and developed at length in a number of statements and documents, especially in the basic statements made by the President of the French Republic to the British Houses of Parliament on 7 April 1960, to the United States Senate and House of Representatives on 25 April and at a Press conference on 31 May, in letters from the President of the Republic to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR dated 10 June, 20 June and 12 August 1960, and in the French representative's many statements at the Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament, including those of 15 March, 1 April, 5 April and, especially, 15 June 1960.

30. France's present views on disarmament had been explained for the first time to the First Committee at the Assembly's fourteenth session. In his statement of 22 October 1959 (1030th meeting), and in document A/C.1/821, the French representative had shown that negotiators should pay immediate attention to the new technological situation caused by the speeding up of scientific progress and by the development of the means of delivery of nuclear weapons, and he had stressed the urgency of finding a solution. The Governments responsible must not repeat the mistake of 1945, when they had been unable to agree on a co-ordinated plan for the production of fissionable material, and must not let the "point of no return" for the means of delivery of nuclear weapons pass them by.

31. The ideas which France had consistently supported for the past year were no longer really disputed in principle. Thus although on 19 September 1959 the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Khrushchev, had put before the General Assembly a plan (A/4219) giving priority to conventional disarmament in an age of stratospheric rockets and thermo-nuclear devices—a veritable paradox, indeed—the Soviet Union had since then radically changed its proposals, and on 2 June 1960 it had submitted to the Ten-Nation Committee at Geneva another disarmament plan (A/4374/Rev.1), which had at first sight seemed to have allowed for some of the French suggestions.

32. The French Government had studied that plan very carefully, particularly in so far as it provided for eliminating the means of delivery of nuclear weapons. As soon as the negotiations had been resumed, precise questions had been put to the Soviet representative. The answers, or, more often, the lack of answers, had soon shown that there was still unfortunately wide disagreement. To proclaim the destruction or prohibition of the means of delivery of nuclear weapons would not miraculously bring those measures into effect. They must be permanent mutual control. To prevent rockets, satellites, air-
craft or ships from suddenly launching weapons of nuclear destruction there must be careful, permanent control over many launching-sites, bases or factor, as necessary. Effective measures of disarmament could not be expected until the conditions for such control had been adopted and implemented by common agreement.

33. To sum up, France thought that nuclear disarmament should be begun at once with measures which would be effective, i.e., which could be controlled. But as everyone agreed, it had become difficult if not impossible to ensure the elimination or total conversion of existing military fissionable materials and nuclear devices. Stockpiles, in various forms, had become too large and too easy to hide. On the other hand, it would be going too far, and would in any event be difficult, at the present stage of technical and scientific development to prohibit at once the manufacture of rockets, aircraft and satellites and to destroy all those which existed. But there remained one measure which could be achieved and controlled at the present stage, and it would be decisive. It concerned the means of delivering nuclear weapons. It was to prevent the manufacture of satellites, aircraft or ships specially built and equipped to launch such bombs. It would also of course be necessary to destroy those which had already been specially built and equipped for the purpose.

34. According to present studies, the prohibition and destruction of such equipment could be effectively enforced by suitable control of bases, launching-pads and specially equipped factories, wherever they might be, as long as the work was begun quickly, before the "point of no return" was reached; for beyond it any controls would be an illusion. If the necessary steps were taken at once, a decisive advance would have been made towards the use of space vehicles for peaceful uses only, and towards general and complete disarmament.

35. Although rapid technical development made it necessary to re-think the order of importance of disarmament measures, certain long-standing principles of disarmament still held good. In order not to upset the balance of forces overnight during the process of disarmament, progress must be made by "phased" measures such as to ensure every country's safety at every moment, and to allay all suspicions by giving every country the assurance, based on effective control, that others were honestly fulfilling their obligations. Those were the principles which France had set forth at the fourteenth session in document A/C.1/321, and they had again been put before the Geneva Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament in a French-sponsored document, submitted on 25 April 1960 by the five Western Powers, entitled "Principles and conditions for general and complete disarmament under effective international control". That document had been used, with a few changes, as a basis for the draft resolution submitted by Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/C.1/L.250). The French delegation would therefore unreservedly support that draft resolution; however, it wished to draw particular attention to the ideas just set forth, and to point out that there was a danger of reaching an agreement on general forms of words which would prove inadequate on detailed examination and would be of no help in finding the necessary solutions.

36. The United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C.1/L.251) on the appointment of experts similarly echoed proposals which the French representative had made at the First Committee at the twelfth session (87th meeting) and at the thirteenth session (85th meeting). The French delegation would vote for it.

37. Since these problems were vitally important and highly urgent, the French Government had greatly deplored the abrupt withdrawal of the delegations of the five Eastern countries from the Geneva conference. France hoped to resume the interrupted negotiations without delay. The Ten-Nation Committee had been set up under an agreement between the Governments of four countries: the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. That agreement could be ended only by the common consent of the four Governments, not by unilateral denunciation, which would have very serious consequences, especially for the future of disarmament negotiations. France hesitated to contemplate such a possibility; the Geneva negotiations had been far from useless and should be resumed at once. France believed, of course, that the Ten-Nation Committee should maintain close relations with the United Nations, especially with the Disarmament Commission, whose advice and recommendations, whether they came from the Commission itself or from any working bodies in its own right, would always be particularly valuable.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.