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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. QUAISI MON-SACKEY (Ghana) said his delegation agreed that the discussion on disarmament should be given priority over the African item because now that Africa was regaining its independence its people needed to be spared the scourge of unnecessary war so that they might develop their resources to the full.

2. Unfortunately, there had been no real peace since the Second World War. Instead of moving towards disarmament, or even the controlled regulation of armaments, the Powers concerned—despite ceaseless negotiations—continued to be involved in the greatest arms race known to man. Even now, when technological developments made an agreement on disarmament more imperative than ever, another deadlock had been reached.

3. Nevertheless, the discussions that had taken place under the aegis of the United Nations for the past fourteen years had made it possible to maintain valuable contacts and to bring about a certain community of outlook, at least on some questions of principle. In view of the disastrous consequences that a nuclear war would have, there could be no doubt that all the negotiators wished to maintain peace; but accumulated distrust and hostility made it difficult to establish peace on a firmer basis. Moreover, both sides had shown a tendency to utilize negotiations for propaganda purposes, and in putting forward proposals calculated to have a strong appeal, always managed to include at least one feature that the other side could not possibly accept. The proposing side was then able to assert that the opposing side was opposed to the idea of disarmament in general, or that it wanted disarmament without verification, or only control over armaments.

4. Nevertheless, with so much at stake it was essential to ensure that negotiations were resumed, with a readiness on both sides to make genuine concessions. The resolution adopted by the Disarmament Commission on 18 August 1960 (DC/182/Corr.1) and General Assembly resolution 1485 (XV) of 17 October 1960 made clear the urgent need for continuing negotiations on the subject of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Accordingly, the Committee's main task should be, first, to achieve agreement on the general principles which should guide future negotiations, and second, to improve the machinery of negotiation.

5. On the question of principles, there seemed to be agreement on certain fundamental points. There was no question as to the need for general and complete disarmament, and the plans of both sides provided that all armed forces—apart from those needed for internal security—should eventually be disbanded, that all weapons of mass destruction should be eliminated and that outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. It was also agreed that disarmament should be carried out under full international control, with inspection and verification within the framework of the United Nations, and that it should be achieved by stages, the balance being preserved so that no State or group of States should at any time gain a significant military advantage.

6. On the other hand, there was no agreement on the ceilings to be set for internal security forces at the different stages. There were still differences of opinion about the stage and time at which the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery should be enforced. Other areas of disagreement included the principles to govern control and inspection, the elimination of foreign bases and the stage at which a United Nations peace force should be established. But the existence of those differences was no reason for the negotiators to relax their efforts, and it was the task of the First Committee and the General Assembly to create the necessary atmosphere and render the necessary assistance for the immediate resumption of negotiations.
7. In order to understand the present impasse and devise means for overcoming it, a thorough examination of the Western and Soviet views on general and complete disarmament was necessary. From the statements made by the United Kingdom and Soviet representatives, it would seem that the two views concerning inspection and control might not be irreconcilable. In the absence of mutual confidence, the two sides might first agree to discard their weapons, without actually discarding them until impartial inspection had been carried out to ensure that no weapons had been concealed. That method could be applied at the various stages of disarmament proposed by the two sides, so that disarmament would proceed hand in hand with control.

8. With regard to the improvement of existing machinery for negotiations, the representative of Peru had rightly pointed out (1091st meeting) that the relationship of the Ten-Nation Committee to the Disarmament Commission had been too indirect to reflect adequately the responsibilities of the United Nations as laid down in the Charter. The present arrangement, under which the Ten-Nation Committee had merely undertaken to inform the Commission of the progress of its deliberations, was unsatisfactory; the relationship between the two bodies should be made closer and more functional, so as to reflect the ultimate responsibility of the United Nations for peace and disarmament. Moreover, since negotiations necessarily had to be conducted between two sides, it might not be advisable to apply too strictly the rule of geographical distribution which was normally reflected in committees of the General Assembly. However, Ghana had supported the suggestion that the Ten-Nation Committee should be presided over by a neutral chairman, and that the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission should be appointed to that important office. Immediately after his appointment, he should take steps to re-enter the Ten-Nation Committee.

9. The delegation of Ghana also considered that an ad hoc advisory committee, representing the uncommitted nations, should be established to consider the general principles and proposals that had been advanced by the negotiating parties and any technical information that they wished to make available. Such a committee would also be presided over by the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, who would report on its proceedings to the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission. It would define the various points of agreement and the areas of disagreement and offer suggestions which might help the negotiations. After hearing the views of the advisory committee, the neutral chairman of the Ten-Nation Committee would be able to act as umpire in the disarmament negotiations. In short, such an advisory committee would act as a "watchdog" committee as suggested by the representative of Canada (1096th meeting). It should also give careful study to the various proposals put forward in the First Committee.

10. The delegation of Ghana also supported the Pakistan representative's suggestion (1085th meeting) that a comprehensive study should be made of the economic and social consequences of disarmament. It would further propose that in such a study careful consideration should be given to the question how the resources released by controlled disarmament could be used to further human progress. The need for a study of that kind had been stressed by President Nkrumah of Ghana in his statement to the General Assembly (859th plenary meeting).

11. The Ghanaian delegation would submit at a later stage any further suggestions it considered useful, and would also elaborate on its position concerning the various draft resolutions.

12. On the subject of the cessation of nuclear tests, which had always been a matter of grave concern to Ghana, the Ghanaian delegation had wholeheartedly supported the two resolutions which had been adopted at the previous session (resolutions 1402 A and B (XIV)). It would seem, however, that neither the Disarmament Commission nor the Assembly had received a report from the negotiating States, as recommended by the General Assembly. In the meantime the situation had deteriorated, and fresh developments, such as the perfection of a technique for producing low-cost nuclear weapons, posed increasing threats, making it even more imperative than ever that an agreement should be reached on the prohibition of nuclear tests, of the manufacture of new weapons and of the transfer of such weapons to countries not yet possessing them. Yet France, in defiance of General Assembly resolution 1379 (XIV), had conducted two tests on African soil, while countries which had been in a position to influence the French Government had refrained from any action and had not even responded to the Tunisian request for a special session of the General Assembly to consider the matter.

13. As President Nkrumah had told the General Assembly, the element of intimidation implicit in the French tests was a provocation against Africa and a threat to world peace. Nor could it be overlooked that France had been able to carry out its tests only through the military support it received from other nations.

14. Ghana urged all the nuclear Powers to continue to respect the moratorium on tests; no nation had the right to cause genetic or other damage to the human species, regardless of the nationality of its victims. There was no body of responsible opinion which could assert that increased radiation from nuclear explosions did not constitute a danger to mankind. The matter was of particular urgency for Africa, and accordingly the President of Ghana had proposed, as a means of isolating Africa from the effects of nuclear warfare, that no nuclear Power should establish military bases on the African continent. It was gratifying that that view had been so warmly supported by a number of representatives in the Committee; at a later stage in the debate, the Ghanaian delegation hoped to introduce a draft resolution on the subject.\footnote{Subsequently circulated as document A/C.1/L.254 and addenda.} Ghana, like all the smaller and developing countries, wished to be free to consolidate its independence and devote itself to the task of ensuring a higher standard of living for its people. It was therefore keenly aware of the urgent need for disarmament, for unless that goal was achieved quickly, all its sacrifices and aspirations would be destroyed in the ashes of a nuclear war. The common objective should be not more debates on disarmament but the establishment of a world founded on peace and governed by justice and the moral law.
16. Both sides should be able to agree that the achievement of the goals of disarmament involved the progressive liquidation of military bases. In the light of modern technological development, however, it was not clear why the Soviet proposals appeared to differentiate between bases on foreign territory and metropolitan bases; the Soviet insistence on the immediate abolition of foreign bases was somewhat unrealistic.

17. Not only was there a considerable measure of agreement on the ends of disarmament, but there had been some narrowing of the gulf between the respective positions on the principles of disarmament. It was encouraging to note, for example, that the Soviet position with regard to the powers, functions, and organization of the control apparatus had been flexible. That flexibility had led to agreement in General A on a certain aspect of control and on the chronology of disarmament and control measures. In that field, however, differences abounded as soon as the negotiations left the sphere of generalities and went into specific details. At the Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests and the Conference of Experts for the study of possible measures which might be helpful in preventing surprise attack, the Soviet Union had advocated initial control measures which either amounted to virtual self-inspection or excluded from inspection certain matters that must of necessity be subject to verification. It was essential, in the view of the Netherlands delegation, that both sides should agree on the principle embodied in the draft resolution submitted by Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/C.1/1/250): that verification of compliance with disarmament obligations should include the capability to ascertain not only that reduction of armed forces and armaments in agreed amounts took place, but that retained armed forces and armaments did not exceed agreed levels at any stage.

18. Despite the agreement which existed on the ends of disarmament and on certain principles, it was unfortunately clear that the parties were still poles apart on the methods of reaching the goal of general and complete disarmament. Essentially, the Soviet Union and its partners were insisting on the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement on general and complete disarmament, covering all disarmament measures, as a pre-condition for action on any specific measure. The Netherlands Government considered it more sensible to initiate action immediately on whatever measures could find favour with both sides. It had been encouraging to note the Soviet representative's statement (109th meeting) that his country favoured such partial measures of disarmament as the conclusion of a treaty on the discontinuance of nuclear tests and an undertaking by the nuclear Powers not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. While the Netherlands supported both those measures, neither of them could be regarded as a measure of real arms reduction. The Soviet representative had said that an undertaking by States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons would have a beneficial influence on the atmosphere for disarmament; but the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, which the Soviet representative regarded as insufficient, would have an equally beneficial effect and would moreover represent a measure of real disarmament.

19. The desire of the Western Powers to do at once what could be done, without awaiting complete agreement on everything, did not mean that they visualized general and complete disarmament as some undefined final goal which might or might not ever be achieved. On the contrary, they recognized that time-limits were necessary, but were against mandatory and unrealistic time-limits. Indeed, by proposing that the Security Council should decide on the change-over from one phase of disarmament to the next, the Soviet Union had deprived its own time-limits of any mandatory character.

20. The Netherlands delegation had in the past emphasized the urgency of measures of conventional disarmament not only because the parties appeared to have come closest on that subject, but because it was particularly relevant to the nations of continental Europe. He was therefore gratified to note that in the latest Soviet plan (A/4505) the reductions in conventional armaments and armed forces had been transferred back to the first stage. On the other hand, his delegation did not consider that the complete liquidation of all means of delivery of nuclear weapons should be effected during the same first stage. Combined with the withdrawal of foreign troops, that measure would give the communist countries a unilateral military advantage and shift the balance of strength in their favour. The communist countries possessed a geographical advantage: while the countries of Western Europe were separated from the United States by an ocean and would have to maintain lines of communication and transportation over a vast distance, the Soviet Union was on the same continent as Western Europe and its lines of communication with Central Europe were over land. With the complete liquidation of aircraft and ships capable of delivering nuclear weapons in the first stage, Western Europe would be cut off from its American ally, and its defence would be seriously undermined, while the Soviet Union could continue to use its overland communications with Central Europe and would need neither ships nor planes. If the Soviet Union genuinely favoured balanced disarmament, it should apply the principle of progressive reductions to the nuclear field as well as to the conventional field, instead of insisting on the complete liquidation of nuclear weapons and means of delivery at the first stage.

21. The Netherlands hoped that the General Assembly would call for a resumption of detailed disarmament discussions, on the basis of certain principles. It believed that the Ten-Nation Committee was the obvious organ for such negotiations. It would not
object to the appointment of an impartial person to act as chairman of that body, but would reserve its position on the establishment of a United Nations advisory committee until more detailed proposals on the matter had been presented.

22. The Netherlands favoured technical studies on disarmament, but believed that negotiations on the technical and political aspects of disarmament should go hand in hand. It would therefore vote for the United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C.1/L.281), which provided for the work of the technical experts to be subject to a time-limit. It would examine carefully any specific proposals that might be made for a study of the economic consequences of disarmament, although it believed that until concrete progress had been made in disarmament it would be virtually impossible to assess those consequences quantitatively. Lastly, Member States should bear in mind their undertaking, under General Assembly resolution 724 A (VIII), to devote a portion of the savings achieved through disarmament to an international fund, within the framework of the United Nations, to assist development in under-developed countries. That was another reason why disarmament was so urgently to be desired.

23. Mr. MALALASEKERA (Ceylon) said that he would not attempt to assess the blame for the breakdown of the Geneva Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament. But the Committee's failure to reach agreement was most regrettable, especially as the General Assembly had unanimously expressed the hope, in its resolution 1378 (XIV), that the negotiations would result in agreement on measures leading towards the goal of general and complete disarmament. Although neither the First Committee nor the General Assembly was the proper place for negotiations on disarmament, it was the United Nations itself which carried the ultimate responsibility for disarmament. His delegation's main concern in the First Committee would be to register once again its earnest desire that negotiations should be resumed.

24. Only a handful of nations possessed sufficient armed strength to threaten the peace of the world. It was surely not too much to expect that those nations should heed the appeal of all mankind and take measures that the world was not destroyed by their accumulated military might. The only factor that appeared to stand in the way of agreement on disarmament was suspicion and fear, and it was the task of the United Nations to dispel that suspicion and fear by helping to work out a system of enforceable international safeguards for disarmament.

25. It was encouraging that the leaders of the major Powers had frequently expressed their willingness to disarm, and that the representatives in the First Committee of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and France, the four countries which had taken the initiative in setting up the Ten-Nation Committee, had voiced the hope that disarmament negotiations would soon be resumed. As a number of speakers had pointed out, moreover, there was general agreement on certain vital aspects of the disarmament problem.

26. Nevertheless, the disquieting fact remained that the world was divided into two ideological blocs, which sought only agreements that could be turned into diplomatic victories and which seemed to feel that the extermination of the human race would be preferable to the victory of the opposing ideology. The two sides must be made to see that all nations would perish in a nuclear war and that what would emerge from such a war would not be the world desired by either of them.

27. Without general and complete disarmament, there could be no enduring peace. Arms must inevitably be used for war, and the only solution was to destroy them completely. Furthermore, since armaments tended to spread like a cancer, the time factor was vital; any further procrastination would be unforgivable.

28. Although he did not intend to discuss the merits of the various proposals before the Committee, those submitted by the Soviet Union contained the most definite and clear-cut programme; whether the Soviet programme could be implemented in its present form, however, was a matter for further discussion. The West held that complete disarmament could not be achieved unless there was confidence and that measures for disclosure and verification must therefore precede complete disarmament, while the East contended that confidence was impossible without disarmament and that disarmament must therefore precede control measures. In the view of the Ceylonese delegation that disarmament was purely a matter of words and should not constitute a barrier to negotiation. Indeed, both sides now seemed to agree that disarmament and control should proceed simultaneously. In that connexion, his delegation wished to commend the United States representative for the spirit of conciliation which had characterized his statement at the 1093rd meeting; the tenor of the debate might have been very different if that spirit had been shown earlier in the debate.

29. Once the principle was adopted that disarmament and control should proceed simultaneously, there should be no obstacle to the resumption of negotiations on general and complete disarmament. Such negotiations could best be conducted by an expanded disarmament committee including three to five new members drawn from the uncommitted nations, including a chairman, a vice-chairman and a rapporteur. The Committee should be given a definite directive to draw up within the shortest possible time a clear-cut programme of general and complete disarmament, including necessary controls and guarantees, and not to confine itself to determining whether or not such disarmament was possible. In such a directive, moreover, the points of agreement which existed among the sponsors of the various disarmament proposals should be embodied. He appreciated the impatience of those who felt that much time was being wasted in debate on the disarmament question, but urged them not to withhold their co-operation from the disarmament committee in what would be a task of great complexity. While technical experts should certainly be called upon for advice and assistance, they should be asked to submit their report within a few months, and their deliberations should not be permitted to hold up the work of the disarmament committee.

30. His delegation deplored the idea that nothing could be accomplished in the field of disarmament until a new President took office in the United States and until parity was achieved between the countries.
engaged in the space race. He hoped that that was not the case, for in the meantime the arms race was continuing, and huge sums were being spent on it which could be used to relieve the misery of millions of people throughout the world.

31. Mr. LOUTFI (United Arab Republic) observed that the hope engendered by the unanimous adoption of resolution 1378 (XIV) of 20 November 1959 calling for general and complete disarmament had not been fulfilled. On the contrary, relations between the great Powers had deteriorated sharply, and the disarmament negotiations in the Ten-Nation Committee had been broken off. Nevertheless, it was clear from the statements made in the First Committee and from the draft resolutions before it that although there were profound differences between the principal negotiators, they were agreed on certain basic points. Nobody could dispute the fact that the accelerated arms race and the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons represented a real threat to world peace which could be eliminated only by an agreement on general and complete disarmament at the earliest possible date. It had also been recognized by all States that political and territorial objectives could no longer be achieved by resort to war, because war in the nuclear age would undoubtedly result in total annihilation. It was pointless, therefore, to engage in recrimination over past actions or to be unduly discouraged by past failures. All nations should look to the future and exert their efforts to bring about a resumption of negotiations on disarmament as rapidly as possible.

32. With that end in view, the Assembly should lay down precise directives, including guiding principles, to serve as a basis for the work of negotiation. The directives should not go into matters of detail and they should be endorsed by the two groups now constituting the Ten-Nation Committee. The draft resolutions submitted in the First Committee by the two sides (A/C.1/L.249 and A/C.1/L.250) should not be put to the vote; a vote would probably have the effect of making the positions of the parties more rigid rather than more conciliatory. The resolutions could be transmitted to the Ten-Nation Committee or to any negotiating body which might replace it.

33. The directives to the negotiating body should take as their point of departure the principles and measures on which the two sides appeared to be in agreement. In dealing with a problem directly affecting the security of States whose relations were strained by mistrust, caution and realism were essential; no attempt should be made to impose solutions which would be totally unacceptable to one or the other side. The great Powers should understand, however, that the world expected them to make every effort to bring their positions closer together, in the interests of disarmament and peace.

34. Among the guiding principles to be recommended to the negotiators were the principle that no State or group of States should be permitted to acquire a military advantage at any stage of disarmament, and the principle that an effective and adequate system of controls should be established for every measure of disarmament. It was gratifying to note the Soviet Union's repeated assurances to the First Committee that it was prepared to accept such a control system; there was no reason to doubt its motives in giving those assurances. It was also encouraging to find that the United States representative had come closer to the Soviet position on the time to be taken in achieving general and complete disarmament.

35. The United Arab Republic did not object in principle to the appointment of a technical or expert group to examine the technical aspects of disarmament and control. It considered, however, that such a group could not be established until both sides had agreed on certain political decisions and certain principles, and on the desirability of creating such a technical committee.

36. As for the composition of the negotiating body itself, the United Arab Republic regarded the suggestions that its membership should be increased as useful, but considered that preliminary consultations would have to be held between the principal negotiators with a view to reaching agreement in principle on the additional members. The disarmament committee would thus be a committee of the United Nations, and would report to the Disarmament Commission and to the Assembly.

37. His delegation held that the suspension of nuclear tests should continue until an agreement was concluded for the discontinuance of testing. It appealed to the States negotiating at Geneva to pursue their negotiations and make every effort to reach a solution. The conclusion of a treaty on testing would serve as a valuable precedent for future negotiations on other aspects of disarmament. Similarly, the proposals of Ghana and Poland for atom-free zones were of interest, and would help to create a favourable atmosphere. It was also essential that States possessing nuclear weapons should undertake not to give them to other States or to help those States produce such weapons.

38. The United Arab Republic was confident that the major Powers realized the overriding importance of disarmament in the modern world, and would make a real effort to reach agreement in the course of further negotiation.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.