Chairman: Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Kurka (Czechoslovakia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

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. MATSUOZAIRA (Japan) cited Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations, dealing with the functions and powers of the General Assembly, and noted that the Article in question did not consider disarmament per se but rather in connection with the maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, while the General Assembly could consider and make recommendations on the principles governing disarmament, it was responsible neither for conducting negotiations nor for drawing up programmes.

2. Present-day international life was one of terror caused by the prospect of total annihilation. The voluntary renunciation of war had thus become imperative; yet it could not be denied that peace depended upon the balance of power. Although it was important to halt the arms race in order to ensure peace, it would be dangerous to embark on an ad-
its position was in conformity with resolution 1378 (XIV). Among the measures which appeared to be immediately controllable and feasible were the prohibition of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes, the control of vehicles entering outer space, and the prevention of surprise attack. It was to be hoped that those measures would be made the subject of negotiation between the parties concerned as early as possible.

8. After carefully studying the Soviet draft resolution, his delegation was of the opinion that it had two basic short-comings. The first was its rigidity: it called for complete disarmament to be achieved through a single treaty which was to be concluded and implemented within a stipulated period. Although the present age was one of revolutionary changes in technology and military science, the draft resolution contained no provision for adaptation to changing realities. That lack of flexibility might condemn the entire project to failure.

9. The second short-coming of the draft resolution was its ineffectiveness. In order to achieve general and complete disarmament, there would have to be a basic transformation of the international order, a complete revision of the United Nations Charter and a reorganization of the Security Council and revision of its functions, including the abolition of the veto power in such cases as, for example, the organization by the Council of an international force. If, as the Soviet delegation contended, the entire process of general and complete disarmament must be set out beforehand in a single agreement, it was obviously necessary to reach an agreement as well, before a single measure in the Soviet programme was put into effect, on a gigantic plan for the establishment of a new international order. That would mean a further delay, which was unacceptable.

10. His delegation appealed to the Soviet delegation to temper the rigidity of its position and thus permit negotiations to be resumed with a view to reaching agreement as soon as possible.

11. In the case of the suspension of nuclear tests the Soviet Union and the Western Powers had been able to reach agreement on certain points, whereas their positions were originally deemed incompatible. That appeared to justify the hope that the countries concerned would be able to reconcile their viewpoints in the present instance as well, so that it would be possible to resume negotiations. It was regrettable that the Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament had not resulted in agreement on measures looking to general and complete disarmament, but it must be acknowledged that some progress had been made in the course of the negotiations. In particular, it was encouraging to note that in its proposal of 2 June 1960 (A/4374/Rev.1) the Soviet Union had agreed to the possibility of changing the length of the period in which the disarmament programme was to be carried out, which it had originally set at four years. Furthermore, the Soviet representative in the First Committee had stated (1095th meeting) that the transition from one stage to another would take place only after the international control body and the Security Council had ascertained that all States had fulfilled their obligations for the preceding stage. At the same time, the Western Powers recognized that each measure of disarmament must be implemented over a stipulated period of time, although they did not agree to the fixing of a rigid time-table for the whole disarmament process. Those circumstances provided a basis for the hope that the countries concerned would ultimately come to an agreement. In any event, however desirable agreement on certain basic questions might be, it must not be regarded as a sine qua non of a resumption of negotiations.

12. The increasing influence of the small Powers in international affairs was a matter for gratification. Yet it was an undeniable fact that the primary responsibility for disarmament or the control of armaments lay with the United States and the Soviet Union, if only because they were the only nations with the necessary experience and technical knowledge. Therefore, negotiations could only be effective if they were held between the two principal Powers or groups of countries concerned, with the small nations serving rather as spokesmen for world public opinion, whose influence ought not to be underestimated. Accordingly, negotiations should be resumed in the Ten-Nation Committee. That body was satisfactory as at present constituted and there was no reason to alter its composition.

13. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests was still in progress, that agreement had been reached on many important points and that the negotiators were now discussing the structure of the control organ and the inspection system. It was also gratifying that the countries concerned had refrained from carrying out tests of nuclear weapons for some time. However, the situation continued to be insecure and fraught with danger because of the lack of a control system. Japan therefore appealed to the three Powers concerned to endeavour to conclude an agreement as early as possible to formalize the discontinuance of nuclear tests under effective international control. The Japanese Government was prepared to share in the implementation of such an agreement. He hoped that the General Assembly would receive an official report on the results of the negotiations in due course, as provided in resolution 1402 (XIV). He reserved the right to speak again on the subject, in view of its great importance.

14. Mr. AIREN (Ireland) drew the Committee’s attention to the danger, in an age of advertising and propaganda, of drafting blanket resolutions and general declarations which would not be analyzed with sufficient care. The words “general and complete disarmament” might become no more than a constantly reiterated slogan. However, if the ideal of true peace was borne in mind and delegations renounced recrimination, the debates might have a fruitful outcome. But the most important thing was to face reality.

15. For forty years, disarmament had been the subject of discussion by one organ or another seeking to render large-scale warfare impossible. Statesmen had always been at pains to show that the failure of negotiations was not their fault. They had never met a proposal by a direct negative; they had submitted counter-proposals unacceptable to their opponents. Charges and counter-charges had grown in intensity and negotiations had ultimately broken down. The time had come to realize that no country would surrender its arms unless it was assured of equal protection against a potential aggressor under some world order. Ever since the perfection of modern
weapons, disarmament negotiators had been motivated chiefly by fear for the safety of their own peoples and lack of trust, which was understandable in view of the power which a nation possessed. Trust could only be built by gradually taking effective steps, such as the discontinuance of nuclear tests, to implement the aims of the United Nations Charter. It was essential to create and extend areas of law and disarmament while retaining the power to deal with a potential aggressor.

16. Since there was no way to detect a secret store of nuclear weapons, the only solution was to accept the authority of an international body with the power to restrain potential aggressors. Pending the achievement of that goal, the present atomic Powers would retain their nuclear weapons. The present generation would have to learn to live with the bomb and gradually build up the rule of law, without being duped by slogans which concealed the difficulties. The first step in learning to live with the bomb was to prevent the situation from getting worse by stopping the spread of nuclear weapons, which might fall into the hands of a maniac seeking power. Production of nuclear weapons was becoming cheaper and easier. He was confident that, if the nuclear Powers undertook not to give such weapons to other States, the latter would reciprocate by undertaking not to make them. The Irish delegation would again submit a draft resolution on that question at the current session.

17. The second step in learning to live with the bomb was to approach disarmament by geographical areas. The Middle East, Central Europe, Central West Africa and perhaps South-East Asia might become disarmed areas of law. The countries of those areas would agree not to make war upon each other, to settle their disputes peacefully, to restrict their armed forces, not to acquire weapons of mass de-

1/ Subsequently circulated as document A/C.1/L.253/Rev.1 and addenda.

18. Fortunately, nations now had at their disposal the machinery for negotiating, concluding and giving effect to the necessary agreements. In the past, statesmen had had no agreed principles for the establishment of international order and no international executive such as that provided in the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, the moderating influence of a large number of independent countries had not been brought to bear on the great Powers, as was now the case. Today's statesmen would be judged by their opportunities and they would stand to be condemned if they did no more than hurl slogans about general and complete disarmament while the threat of general and complete destruction continued to grow. The prevention of the dissemination of weapons of mass destruction and the establishment of areas of peace were not new ideas; they had proved their worth in the course of history. The responsibility for giving effect to such measures now rested on the Members of the United Nations.

19. Since the last war, various suggestions had been made that the great Powers should divide the world into spheres of influence and keep peace within them by force. That policy could only be carried out at the price of the independence of the countries in those zones of influence. The only way to keep world peace was to strengthen the influence of the United Nations and extend it geographically until finally all nations, great and small, were brought under the rule of law.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.