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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, A/C.1/L.254 and Add.1) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. KAMIL (Federation of Malaya) said that his delegation had felt profound disappointment at the interruption of the Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva, particularly in view of the high hopes they had aroused. However, the First Committee should not engage in recriminations, which could only aggravate tension. Rather, it should patiently discuss the serious issues involved, in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 1495 (XV), adopted unanimously on 18 October 1960, and should restate the common objective of general and complete disarmament, using every endeavour to attain that goal.

2. The quest for disarmament must remain the primary preoccupation of the United Nations, for the present state of peace, dependent as it was upon the nuclear deterrent or the balance of military power between two groups, was frighteningly precarious. Apart from the waste of resources it entailed, at the expense of economic and social development everywhere, that means of preventing war actually increased the risks of war, for any slight imbalance or misjudgement might result in total annihilation. Until disarmament was achieved, the rival military blocs would continue to build up armaments. Since, as experience had shown, every failure in disarmament negotiations resulted in increased fear and suspicion, which in turn led to the further acceleration of the armaments race, any continued delay in resuming negotiations could be hazardous. The United Nations should therefore use all its authority and powers of moral persuasion to induce the major military Powers, which bore the responsibility for reaching a disarmament agreement, to resume their efforts to that end.

3. It was reassuring to note that all delegations had reaffirmed their conviction of the imperative need for disarmament. Despite differences in approach and emphasis, the common objective of the Western and Soviet proposals was general and complete disarmament.

4. The urgent need for disarmament arose not so much from moral considerations as from the need to ensure the security of all nations and the survival of the world. But mutual fear and suspicion could not easily be removed, and must be taken into account in any realistic appraisal of the disarmament problem. For no major Power which maintained a state of constant military preparedness, in the belief that that provided the only safeguard against attack, could be expected to disarm without tangible guarantees that its national security would not be endangered.

5. Any programme of disarmament must be consistent with the security of every nation throughout the entire period of its execution. It was clear, therefore, that disarmament would have to be carried out by stages during which no side would attain any military advantage; for pending the achievement of general and complete disarmament, the balance of remaining armaments must continue to be the safeguard against war. Both sides appeared to accept the need for simultaneous and balanced measures of conventional and nuclear disarmament, with an effective system of inspection and control to ensure the full implementation of each agreed measure of disarmament. Since, however, they differed radically in their views of how that principle should be applied, the essential task must be to agree on a common approach to the objective. The First Committee would do best to leave it to the negotiators themselves to discuss the technical details of the various proposals, but it could and should enunciate principles which could guide them. Its deliberations would be valuable if they helped the parties to reappraise their respective positions and to view them from the standpoint of...
other Members of the United Nations, who were no less interested in disarmament than they were. Given such a reappraisal, there might be greater hope of a readiness on their part for compromise, which was essential to constructive negotiations.

6. If, in the present situation of mutual fear and inadequate technical knowledge, the time was not yet ripe for the conclusion of a single agreement for general and complete disarmament within a fixed time-limit, it might be preferable to concentrate first on more modest measures which could be agreed on and effectively controlled. Such a course would prevent any loss of time, for the process could be gradually expanded to cover all other aspects of disarmament; it would also help to build trust and confidence among the parties concerned. It should not be confused with partial disarmament, since the measures provided for would not be isolated ones but would be planned as a series of step-by-step measures aimed at general and complete disarmament.

7. At the present stage, statements of principle alone were not enough; nor would the adoption of resolutions supporting one side's proposal and rejecting the other's help to bring about the much-needed resumption of negotiations. The draft resolution introduced by the representative of Canada at the 108th meeting \(^1\) was to be welcomed, since the assistance of impartial officers in the negotiations might be helpful in allaying fears and suspicions. The ad hoc committee envisaged in the Canadian proposal could do useful work by sounding out the views of all parties directly concerned and making appropriate recommendations. By providing for appropriate consultation with the four major Powers, the Canadian proposal also guaranteed that any recommendations made by the ad hoc committee would have the support of those Powers; that was important, because no disarmament negotiations would be possible without their willing participation. The ad hoc committee might well also consider the possibility of bringing into the disarmament negotiations certain Powers outside the United Nations, such as Communist China, which in view of its military power must surely be included in any disarmament programme. It might also usefully explore the possibility of initiating international measures, under United Nations auspices, designed to prevent local conflicts, for local wars often led to large-scale conflagrations. The establishment of a stand-by United Nations force might provide the necessary machinery for that purpose, and might be an effective deterrent to aggression. That could be one of the measures which would help to foster an atmosphere of confidence in which fruitful disarmament negotiations could be held.

8. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) said the debate in the First Committee had shown that all States fervently desired progress towards disarmament, and recognized that the General Assembly had both a moral and a juridical competence in the matter. It had been generally agreed, however, that the Assembly could not deal with specific measures of disarmament or with the specific provisions of a treaty on general and complete disarmament; those were matters which could only be settled by negotiation between the great Powers. It had also been a matter of general agreement that negotiations should be resumed without delay. Thus, the Assembly had already performed a signal service: it had created an atmosphere favourable to the further discussion of disarmament.

9. A number of important proposals had been put forward in the Committee on the subject of the negotiating machinery. They included the suggestions that the discussions in the Ten-Nation Committee should be presided over by the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, that that Committee should also be given a neutral vice-chairman and rapporteur, and that its membership should be increased by the addition of five neutral States. In addition, Canada had introduced a draft resolution, \(^1\) which the Peruvian delegation viewed with great sympathy because it would prevent any interruption in the work on disarmament. If all the proposals made in the First Committee were merely transmitted to the Disarmament Commission, the discussions in the Commission would continue on the same lines as that in the First Committee. The existence of the Disarmament Commission, with its functions of general guidance, implied that of a smaller negotiating body, but such a body, whatever its form might be, could exist only with the acquiescence of the Soviet Union. Since disarmament could be achieved only as a result of agreement between the major Powers, the First Committee should urge the resumption of negotiations in whatever form, manner and place would be acceptable to both sides. Additional evidence of the Assembly's continuing concern with disarmament would be the establishment of a technical committee; such a committee, which would work within the framework of the Ten-Nation Committee, would spare the Disarmament Commission much fruitless debate. What was most important, however, was to call upon the parties to resume negotiations.

10. The General Assembly could only make moral recommendations; it could not impose solutions or force action. If the Soviet Union was unwilling to resume negotiations, the Assembly must respect its position; it could not force the Soviet Union to adopt resolutions, by whatever majority. Consequently, the unanimous adoption of a resolution likely to lead to action would have to be prepared by prior consultation, in a spirit of friendship, with the parties primarily concerned and by securing their co-operation in advance. If the Assembly could succeed in persuading the parties, despite their political and psychological differences, to sit down at a conference table, present their views candidly and with a sincere will to achieve results, and respond to the clamour of world public opinion for a just and speedy solution of the disarmament problem, the Peruvian delegation was convinced that such a solution could be achieved. It was important that the Assembly should take action at the current session, if only in the form of an appeal to both sides to resume negotiations. Failure to do so would aggravate existing tensions, while action often opened up prospects for a solution.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.