AGENDA ITEMS 67, 86, 69 AND 73*

Disarmament and the situation with regard to the fulfilment of General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV) of 20 November 1959 on the question of disarmament (continued)

Report of the Disarmament Commission (continued)

Suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests (continued)

Prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons (continued)

Consideration of draft resolutions (continued)

Chairman: Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon).

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

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its 1120th meeting, when the Committee had last discussed the question of disarmament, it had decided that the first item of business it would take up after consideration of the

Algerian question would be the procedure and voting on the various draft resolutions on disarmament before the Committee; he hoped therefore that speakers would confine their remarks to that subject. He recalled further that although full agreement had not been reached at the 1159th meeting on which resolutions should be put to the vote before the end of the first part of the current session, there had been no objection to the Committee's voting on the draft resolutions relating to the suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests and the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons.

2. Mr. NESBITT (Canada) said it was widely recognized that the United Nations bore the ultimate responsibility in regard to disarmament, and that the Disarmament Commission should give a more significant role to that field. It was also undeniable that real progress towards disarmament could be achieved only through patient, serious negotiation between the great military Powers; to attempt to direct the course of disarmament by means of majority votes in the United Nations would accomplish nothing, and might prove harmful.

3. The Committee was clearly prepared to vote at once on the two draft resolutions dealing with the suspension of nuclear and thermo-nuclear tests, the three-Power draft (A/C.1/L.256) and the twenty-six-Power draft (A/C.1/L.256/Rev.1), and on the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.256/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-3) dealing with the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons. The remaining draft resolutions proposed various measures which called for detailed study and most of which, in the opinion of many delegations, would be feasible and useful only within the framework of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. It might be advisable to deal with those draft resolutions at a later date in the Disarmament Commission, in plenary session of the General Assembly, or in both. The three draft resolutions dealing with the question of principles deserved special mention; the Committee owed the warmest tribute to the efforts of the Indian representative and others, who had very nearly succeeded in formulating an agreed basis for future negotiations.

4. At the same time, action must be taken to focus continued attention on disarmament and on the general desire felt in the United Nations for early progress. He noted in that connexion that the nineteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.256/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-3), of which Canada was a sponsor, was the only one of those before the Committee which dealt directly with the problem of bringing about further negotiations on disarmament. It placed strong emphasis on the role of the Disarmament Commission in efforts to achieve that goal, and its provisions for continuing study of the various proposals submitted at the current session had been greatly strengthened.

* Resumed from the 1120th meeting.
The draft resolution also sought to give the medium and smaller Powers greater opportunities to contribute to the task of bringing about a resumption of negotiations.

5. The operative paragraphs of that draft resolution refuted the assertion that it was designed to create the impression that active steps were to be taken in regard to disarmament whereas in fact none were contemplated. Paragraph 2 expressed the hope that every effort would be made to achieve the earliest possible continuation of negotiations among the Powers principally concerned. Paragraph 4 requested the Disarmament Commission to recommend ways and means of facilitating the early resumption of such negotiations and to make recommendations on the essential principles which should guide them. Paragraph 5 requested the Disarmament Commission to meet more frequently, after negotiations had been resumed, in order to consider specific disarmament matters, including reports from the negotiating Powers, and to give the latter guidance. The sponsors of the draft resolution felt that the Committee, by referring to the Disarmament Commission the questions it had been discussing, should enable the latter to play its rightful part in regard to disarmament by promoting discussion of the problem either at the resumed fifteenth session of the General Assembly or in any special negotiating body agreed on by the great Powers. It should be left for the Disarmament Commission itself to decide on an appropriate date for a meeting.

6. If the Committee ended its three months of discussion on disarmament without reaching any kind of conclusion, it would be accused of indifference to a vital world problem. The sponsors of the nineteen-Power draft resolution believed that it offered the world a measure of hope and showed that the Members of the United Nations were determined to continue the search for a solution through serious negotiations.

7. He therefore formally moved that the Committee should decide:

(a) To vote immediately on the three-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.256) and the twenty-six-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.258/Rev.1) on the suspension of nuclear tests, and the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.253/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-3) concerning the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons;


(g) To vote on the procedural draft resolution sponsored by nineteen Governments in document A/C.1/L.255/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-5.

8. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said his delegation agreed that a vote should be taken immediately on the three draft resolutions referred to in paragraph (g) of the Canadian motion. His delegation also agreed that the Committee would be unable, in the time remaining before the end of the first part of the fifteenth session, to complete its consideration of the draft resolutions referred to in paragraph (b) of the Canadian motion. However, he wished to submit an amendment to the Canadian motion: he proposed that paragraph (c) should be deleted and that the nineteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.255/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-5) should be included in paragraph (b) of the motion.

9. The nineteen-Power draft resolution dealt with agenda items 67 and 86, the discussion of which had not yet been completed; there was no more reason to vote on that draft resolution now than on any other one dealing with the items in question; moreover, a decision taken now on a draft resolution on those two items would tend to influence the future course of the debate. His delegation would suggest deferring action until the resumed session, when the debate could be completed and a vote taken on all the draft resolutions before the Committee which dealt with the two items. He did not question the motives which had prompted Canada to submit its proposal; however, in view of the deadlock that had arisen at the current session, in which many leading political figures had participated, it would be wiser to wait until new personalities and new conditions had come into clearer focus before proceeding with consideration of the problem of disarmament.

10. It was clear that the nineteen-Power draft resolution was not procedural in character, but on the contrary touched on matters of substance. Operative paragraph 2, for example, dealt with the continuation of negotiations between the Powers principally concerned and the possible appointment of an impartial officer to preside over those negotiations. Paragraph 3 was inappropriate in that it called for the transmission to the Disarmament Commission of all the documents and records of discussions relating to disarmament at the current session, despite the fact that those discussions had not yet been completed. Paragraph 4 would tend to prolong the present deadlock, since it presupposed a meeting of the Disarmament Commission even though the question whether it was desirable for the Commission to meet at all was a highly controversial one. Furthermore, paragraph 4 was unrealistic in referring to the resumption of negotiations on general and complete disarmament and to the essential principles which should guide those negotiations, since there was no agreement among the great Powers on precisely what it meant to conduct negotiations on general and complete disarmament. Paragraph 5 called for the Disarmament Commission to give guidance to the Powers taking part in any future negotiations; but it was hard to see how the Commission could reach agreement on such guidance when its parent body, the General Assembly, had been unable to do so. Paragraph 6, which recommended the appointment by the Disarmament Commission of appropriate ad hoc subcommittees, overlooked the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union would obviously be unable to reach agreement on the composition of such committees. Finally, paragraph 7 in effect committed the General Assembly not to discuss disarmament until 1 June 1961, even though a resumed session was to be held in March.

11. He appreciated the Canadian representative's eagerness to show the world during the next few months that the United Nations was dealing actively with the problem of disarmament; however, world opinion surely recognized that a period of readjust-
12. Mr. NESBITT (Canada) said he had suggested that the nineteen-Power draft resolution should be voted on separately because it was a procedural and not a substantive proposal. His reason for suggesting that votes on the other draft resolutions should be postponed was that there had not been sufficient time to give them the careful consideration they merited.

13. The representative of India had suggested that operative paragraph 2 of the nineteen-Power draft was in effect a substantive proposal. Surely, a mere expression of hope could hardly be considered in that light. As for the question of when the Disarmament Commission should meet, the sponsors of the draft resolution were making no specific recommendation. The matter would be left entirely to the Chairman and members of the Disarmament Commission, in consultation with the great Powers. It might prove inadvisable to convene the Disarmament Commission before the resumed fifteenth session of the General Assembly. On the other hand, there might be good reason to convene the Commission at some time in February, for instance, in order to prepare for the resumed session. It might be useful to give careful study to the many admirable proposals and draft resolutions which had been submitted to the Committee.

14. In order to dispel any misconceptions concerning operative paragraph 5 of the nineteen-Power draft, it should be pointed out that that paragraph did not refer to any activities to be undertaken at the present time; it clearly envisaged a situation in the future when the principal Powers had started their negotiations.

15. As to operative paragraph 6, there was certainly no question of setting up ad hoc committees within the next few days; the committees would be appointed at some future date when the Chairman and members of the Disarmament Commission thought that conditions were favourable.

16. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) wondered whether, in view of what the Canadian representative had said, it was necessary for the Committee to spend time now discussing the draft resolution. Certainly, any feasible informal action could be taken, but such proposed measures as the "continuation of negotiations among the Powers principally concerned" and the "appointment of an impartial presiding officer" were, if not controversial, at least questions of substance which required agreement; and in matters of such import, the General Assembly, rather than the Disarmament Commission, must take the responsibility.

17. The effect of the nineteen-Power draft resolution seemed to be to take the matter out of the General Assembly's hands and place it before the Disarmament Commission. But if agreement could not at present be reached in the General Assembly, it was hardly likely to be reached in the Disarmament Commission, which had the same membership as the Assembly.

18. With regard to operative paragraph 3, the Canadian representative had not commented on the objection that it would be improper for the General Assembly to transmit to the Disarmament Commission the documents and records of the fifteenth session relating to disarmament, since they were not complete.

19. So far as the proposed ad hoc committees were concerned, to recommend that the Disarmament Commission should establish such bodies, even at a later date, was to put the cart before the horse, since the establishment of ad hoc committees would be impossible in the absence of prior agreement between the parties principally concerned.

20. Finally, in operative paragraph 7 the Disarmament Commission was requested to submit a progress report to the Assembly by 1 June 1961 but no date was set for it to begin its work. Thus, the Assembly would probably be unable to consider the question of disarmament at the resumed session, which was due to start in March and would be over before June. Similarly, the paragraph would render paragraph (b) of the Canadian motion ineffective, since the Disarmament Commission would not be obliged to report until 1 June on the draft resolutions postponed for further consideration.

21. He hoped therefore that the Canadian delegation, in the interest of promoting the cause of disarmament, would consider deleting paragraph (c) of its motion.

22. Mr. ALEMAYEHOU (Ethiopia) observed that the representative of Canada seemed to have arbitrarily chosen four draft resolutions to be voted on while recommending that consideration of the others should be postponed. But whatever criteria the Canadian representative may have applied in making his choice, it seemed to the Ethiopian delegation that if any draft resolution was controversial it was the nineteen-Power draft of which Canada was a sponsor, which provided that the Disarmament Commission should deal with many questions which had not yet been discussed by the General Assembly. Besides, if the General Assembly could not at present agree on guiding principles for negotiations on disarmament, it was hardly likely that the Disarmament Commission would be able to do so.

23. On the other hand, the representative of Canada had described as controversial many drafts which were either purely procedural or designed to create a better political and psychological climate for disarmament negotiations. Surely, those draft resolutions should be voted on now for that very reason.

24. By submitting its motion formally, the Canadian delegation had placed the Committee in a difficult position. The Ethiopian delegation had hoped that the Committee would be given the opportunity to review all the draft resolutions and to decide which were controversial and which might facilitate future negotiations on disarmament. He therefore appealed to the representative of Canada not to press his motion.
25. Mr. MATSCH (Austria) recalled that Austria had, with India and Sweden, sponsored a separate draft resolution on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests (A/C.1/L.256); that draft did not conflict with the twenty-six-Power draft (A/C.1/L.256/Rev.1), which dealt with the question on a broader basis. The issues at stake in the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests were of such importance and urgency that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.256 believed a special draft resolution on the subject to be both justified and advisable.

26. Mr. GIBSON BARROZA (Brazil) said that his delegation, for one, was grateful to the Canadian delegation for its commendable efforts to find some procedure which would enable the major Powers to resume their negotiations. The nineteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.255/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-5) was not in his view a substantive proposal in the same sense as draft resolutions A/C.1/L.249, A/C.1/L.250 and A/C.1/L.259 and Add.I-2. To be frank, however, it must also be said that it could not be described as "non-controversial" either.

27. If, at a later stage, the Committee decided to resume its discussion of the substance of the draft resolutions, the Brazilian delegation would have an amendment to submit to the second operative paragraph of the nineteen-Power draft resolution. As would be recalled, the Brazilian delegation had suggested earlier that the negotiating body should have an impartial vice-chairman and rapporteur as well as an impartial presiding officer. He wondered whether Iceland, which was now one of the spon- sors of the nineteen-Power draft, had withdrawn its amendment to that effect.

28. Mr. MENDELovich (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the USSR delegation was prepared to support all measures likely to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Thus, it would be prepared to vote at once in favour of the twelve-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.259 and Add.I-2), one of the Polish draft resolutions (A/C.1/L.260/Rev.1), the ten-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.254 and Add.I-3) and the seven-Power text (A/C.1/L.264/Rev.1). Since, however, the Soviet Union agreed that problems relating to disarmament could not be decided by majority vote, it was willing to defer the vote on draft resolutions on which agreement had not been reached between the major Powers concerned. Moreover, it would not insist that the USSR draft resolution submitted to the Assembly during the opening debate in plenary session (A/4599) be put to the vote.

29. The USSR delegation agreed that a vote should be taken forthwith on the two draft resolutions relating to the suspension of nuclear tests (A/C.1/L.256 and A/C.1/L.258/Rev.1) and on the five-Power text on the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/L.253/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-3). On the other hand, it did not agree with the Canadian proposal that the nineteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.255/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-5) should be put to the vote at the present stage, since its effect would be to delete several important problems from the Assembly's agenda at its fifteenth session and refer them to the Disarmament Commission. Such a proposal could be regarded only as a manoeuvre by the Western Powers to delay further a solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament. Moreover, the Canadian representative's suggestion that the Disarmament Commission could meet towards the end of February 1961 had no basis in reality. For those reasons, the USSR opposed paragraph (g) of the Canadian motion, and supported the Indian amendment. If that amendment was adopted, the USSR would vote in favour of paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Canadian motion.

30. Mr. WIRJOPRANOTO (Indonesia) also supported the Indian amendment to Canada's formal motion. It was clear that the Committee could not be expected to take any action on the most important problems of general and complete disarmament before the close of the first part of the fifteenth session. On the other hand, it might be able to make real progress at the resumed session, for by that time, he hoped, mistrust among the great Powers might have been reduced and a more imaginative approach agreed upon. Moreover, there was no danger of the United Nations being accused of indifference to the disarmament problem; the world had been aware of the tremendous efforts made in the Committee and would appreciate them.

31. The danger of adopting the nineteen-Power draft resolution arose from the possibility that if it referred the most important problems of disarmament to the Disarmament Commission, the Assembly might find itself unable to take constructive action on them at the resumed session. That situation would be the more regrettable if the political climate should change substantially for the better during the interval. In the circumstances, he appealed to the Canadian representative not to press for a vote on the nineteen-Power draft resolution. However, he agreed that a vote should be taken on the non-controversial draft resolutions dealing with the suspension of nuclear tests and the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons before the close of the first part of the session.

32. Mr. PAZHWAH (Afghanistan), speaking on a point of order, proposed that the list of speakers in the procedural discussion should be closed and a vote taken on the Canadian motion and the Indian amendment to it.

33. There being no objection, the CHAIRMAN declared the list of speakers in the procedural discussion closed. After hearing the three speakers who were already on the list, the Committee would proceed to a vote.

34. Mr. QUAYSON-SACKEY (Ghana), speaking on a point of order, reminded the Committee that he had not yet formally introduced the draft resolution sponsored by Ghana and six other States (A/C.1/L.264/Rev.1).

35. The CHAIRMAN assured the representative of Ghana that he would be given the opportunity to do so.

36. Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Poland) said that his delegation would be prepared to vote on all the draft resolutions before the Committee. Those submitted by Poland (A/C.1/L.252/Rev.1 and A/C.1/L.260/Rev.1) dealt with questions of great urgency, especially in view of recent reports indicating that there was a danger of atomic weapons spreading to territories outside Europe. However, Poland recognised
that majority votes on the draft resolutions relating to disarmament could not produce solutions, and would agree to defer the vote on the Polish drafts on the understanding that the Committee would vote only on the non-controversial proposals before it. Accordingly, Poland would support paragraph (g) of the Canadian motion.

37. On the other hand, the nineteen-Power draft resolution was clearly of a controversial nature. The Brazilian delegation had indicated its intention of submitting an amendment to it; and the Indian representative had pointed out that several of the proposals referred to in its operative part touched upon the substance of the question of general and complete disarmament. Moreover, the effect of the draft resolution would be to remove all the substantive aspects of the disarmament problem from the Assembly's agenda and to transfer them to the Disarmament Commission. Operative paragraph 3, under which all the documents discussed by the First Committee and the records of its discussions would be transmitted to the Commission, was procedurally irregular: only draft resolutions approved by the Committee could be transmitted; the others remained the property of the General Assembly and could still be amended, withdrawn or replaced. For those reasons, Poland felt that the nineteen-Power draft should not be put to the vote at the present stage.

38. Mr. THORS (Iceland) said that he had withdrawn his amendment (A/C.1/L.257) to the original draft resolution submitted by Canada, Norway and Sweden (A/C.1/L.255), and had joined the sponsors of the revised version of that proposal (A/C.1/L.255/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1-5). The Brazilian representative's observations implied that he might wish to amend the revised text by re-introducing the idea contained in the Icelandic amendment. Moreover, there appeared to be considerable opposition on other grounds to putting the revised text to the vote. In the circum-
stances, he suggested that a decision on paragraph (c) of Canada's motion should be postponed until the sponsors of the nineteen-Power draft resolution had had an opportunity to consult together in order to decide whether or not to press it to the vote at the present time. On the other hand, Iceland shared the general view that a vote could be taken before the day was over on the two draft resolutions relating to the suspension of nuclear tests and the five-Power draft regarding the prevention of the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons.

39. Mr. BURNS (Canada) pointed out that the draft resolutions referred to in paragraph (g) of the Canadian motion had been selected after consultation with many other delegations. The motion should not be interpreted as an attempt to discriminate between the various draft resolutions before the Committee; Canada's only intention had been to select the draft resolutions on which most delegations were prepared to vote. In order to dispel misunderstanding, he wished to emphasize that the effect of adopting the nineteen-Power draft resolution would not be to remove the draft resolutions enumerated in paragraph (b) of the Canadian motion from the Assembly's agenda and refer them to the Disarmament Commission. On the contrary, it would be open to the Assembly at its resumed session to discuss any of the draft resolutions before it, including the one yet to be formally introduced by Ghana (A/C.1/L.264/Rev.1).

40. He requested that a vote on the Canadian motion should be postponed until the following meeting, to allow time for consultation.

41. Mr. PAZHWAK (Afghanistan) said that, in that case, he would not press his request for an immediate vote on the Canadian motion and the Indian amendment.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.