

United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWENTIETH SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE, 1368th
MEETING

Thursday, 28 October 1965,
at 3.10 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Agenda item 106:

<i>Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (con- tinued)</i>	
<i>General debate (continued)</i>	85

Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

AGENDA ITEM 106

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (continued)
(A/5976, A/5986-DC/227, A/C.1/L.337, A/C.1/
L.338)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. Salim RASHID (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the proposals which had been submitted on the problem of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons all offered a basis for agreement. The question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons could not be isolated from the goal of comprehensive and complete disarmament. A treaty or agreement restricting nuclear weapons to the present nuclear Powers would not guarantee the security of the majority of States which, as a matter of deliberate policy or because of temporary incapacity, did not possess those destructive weapons. All possibility of blackmail or bullying, or of national feelings of frustration and insecurity, must be avoided.

2. Any treaty on non-proliferation should embody certain essential features. Firstly, side by side with the commitment of non-nuclear States not to manufacture or possess nuclear weapons there should be a commitment by the nuclear States to adopt a definite programme for the reduction and eventual destruction of such weapons. Secondly, there should be safeguards to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons through multilateral schemes and military alliances. Thirdly, the treaty should prohibit the transfer of scientific data and the means of delivery and storage of nuclear weapons, as well as the provision of other ancillary services. Fourthly, there should be effective safeguards against violation or abuse. In that connexion, his delegation was pleased to note that the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency at its ninth session had adopted a revised safeguards system, and that increasing use was being made of international safeguards by certain States.

3. Although all the African Heads of State had declared their readiness to undertake not to manufacture or acquire control of nuclear weapons, the

minority racist régime of South Africa had already made a start on the development of nuclear energy. Although its nuclear centre was alleged to be engaged in research for peaceful purposes, the transition to military uses could be carried out swiftly, easily and secretly. For that reason, the General Assembly should adopt a declaration supporting the principle of the denuclearization of Africa.

4. The fifth essential feature of a treaty on non-proliferation was a guarantee to non-nuclear States of protection against aggression. The possibility of the proliferation of nuclear weapons by acquisition—in other words, through purchase or barter—should not be overlooked. The export of arms was an important sector of the economies of certain countries, and drastic measures should be taken immediately to ensure that nuclear weapons did not find their way into the arms trade.

5. The sixth feature of a treaty on non-proliferation should be a complete ban on nuclear weapon tests, or, in the case of States parties to the Treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, an extension of that Treaty to cover underground tests. Agreement on the cessation of all nuclear tests had been urged by the international community for many years.

6. His delegation supported the remarks made by the Italian representative (1357th meeting) concerning the economic aspects of the problem. It was little enough to ask that a small proportion of the resources now devoted to the production of nuclear weapons should be diverted for the benefit of the hungry majority of the world's population. The disparity between levels of living in the world was the most serious contradiction of the present time, and was a serious threat to world peace and security.

7. Mr. MUDENGE (Rwanda) regretted that, in spite of the recommendation contained in paragraphs 2 (c) of the Disarmament Commission's resolution of 15 June 1965,^{1/} the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had not at its last series of meetings made any significant progress in drafting a treaty to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. He noted with satisfaction, however, that the two great Powers had both demonstrated their awareness of the need to find some lasting solution to that problem as soon as possible; and the draft treaties submitted respectively by the United States^{2/} and the USSR (A/5976) merited serious consideration, as did the joint memorandum on

^{1/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/225.

^{2/} *Ibid.*, document DC/227, annex 1, sect. A.

non-proliferation submitted by the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee^{3/} and the Italian draft unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons.^{4/}

8. From the statements already made in the First Committee, it was clear that all delegations earnestly hoped to find a solution to the problem of proliferation as soon as possible; but in view of the differences of opinion which existed between the great Powers, it was equally clear that great efforts would be required before agreement could be reached.

9. His delegation appealed to the two great Powers to disregard for a moment the differences in their respective political positions and to try to view the problem in a new light, so that a really decisive contribution to the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation could be made during the General Assembly's current session.

10. A treaty on non-proliferation should be based, firstly, on a solemn undertaking by the nuclear Powers not to transfer atomic weapons to any non-nuclear country whatsoever. Further, the treaty should not give the nuclear Powers any advantages over the non-nuclear countries; it should be regarded as a permanent international obligation and should not include any ambiguous or controversial provisions; and it should not contain any escape clause which would weaken its impact even before it was signed.

11. Though agreement to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons was a matter of extreme urgency, a treaty on non-proliferation was not an end in itself but merely a means to the supreme end of general and complete disarmament under international control. The best way of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons would be to conclude a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons altogether—that is, a treaty which would prevent the nuclear Powers from continuing to produce nuclear weapons and would prohibit the non-nuclear Powers from starting to produce them.

12. A treaty on non-proliferation unaccompanied by practical measures of general and complete disarmament would jeopardize the security of the non-nuclear countries; his delegation whole-heartedly supported the request made by the Nigerian representative (1356th meeting) that the treaty should include an undertaking by the nuclear Powers never in any circumstances to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries. Further, as the Peruvian representative had suggested (1361st meeting), the treaty should be placed under United Nations guarantees.

13. Measures should be taken forthwith to destroy nuclear weapons—even before the nuclear Powers had agreed to abandon the production of such weapons altogether and to destroy existing stockpiles; and the implementation of the United States proposal that the United States and the USSR should each destroy a certain number of their nuclear weapons and transfer to peaceful uses the fissionable materials so obtained would be a useful step in that direction.

^{3/} Ibid., sect. E.

^{4/} Ibid., sect. D.

14. Mr. RAZAFITRIMO (Madagascar) said that his was a young and peace-loving country, which was not unaware of the importance of disarmament or of the disastrous effects which a nuclear war might have for the whole of mankind.

15. In principle, his delegation was in favour of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, not as an end in itself but as a means of restricting nuclear weapons and achieving the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

16. His country neither wished, nor had the means, to acquire nuclear weapons. However, a treaty on non-proliferation would not in itself suffice to prevent nuclear, or even non-nuclear, wars; lasting peace could be achieved only by the genuine desire for peace, expressed in the form of general and complete disarmament.

17. Mr. RICHARDSON (Jamaica) said that his delegation was grateful to the United States and the Soviet Union for submitting draft treaties on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and thought that negotiation aimed at closing the gap between the two drafts and producing an agreed single text of the treaty should begin as soon as possible after the disarmament items on the agenda for the current session of the Assembly had been dealt with. His Government was also grateful to the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee for the untiring efforts they had made to secure agreement on non-proliferation and for the suggestions contained in their joint memorandum on the subject. With reference to the joint memorandum, he did not question the importance of tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race or to limit or deduce stocks of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles; but, in the interests of securing immediate and positive results in one small area of the effort to achieve general and complete disarmament, his Government would be content if those tangible steps were to follow—if they could not be coupled with—agreement on measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons. The non-nuclear Powers might be well advised, in fact, to subscribe forthwith to a treaty on non-proliferation without requiring concomitant evidence of nuclear arms reduction; and they should not allow the absence of such evidence to delay the conclusion of the treaty. They should, however, be free to denounce such a treaty after a specified period—say two or three years—unless by the end of that period some tangible limitation or reduction in nuclear armaments had been achieved.

18. It was generally agreed by members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee that a treaty on non-proliferation should prohibit States not already possessing the independent power to use nuclear weapons from acquiring that power, and that it should prohibit States already possessing the power to use nuclear weapons from assisting other States to acquire it.

19. The main issue on which opinions differed was the precise meaning of non-proliferation, or the extent to which the *status quo*—particularly, existing arrangements between members of the two large military alliances regarding the control and possession of nuclear weapons and authority to use them—was

subject to negotiation. In his delegation's view, information on the exact nature of those arrangements should be frankly given and received across the table, so that prospective parties to the treaty would have a precise idea of what was negotiable and what was not. No national Government and no citizen of a nation which was not a permanent member of the Security Council should be enabled to acquire or gain control of, or be given the power to use, nuclear weapons.

20. Referring to the question of provision for amendments to the treaty, he said that the Jamaican Government would find it difficult to enter into any new international agreement which vested in any single State the power of vetoing amendments to it. Under article IV of the Soviet draft treaty, any amendment would have to be approved by a majority of the votes of all the parties to the treaty, including the votes of all parties possessing nuclear weapons. Would it not be sufficient to provide that amendments to the treaty should enter into force if they were approved by a majority of all the parties to the treaty, including only a majority of the nuclear States?

21. Further, while the treaty should obviously contain no provision under which a non-nuclear State could legitimately become a nuclear State, it should provide a simple procedure to enable a nuclear State to change its treaty status, without being required either to withdraw from the treaty or to seek amendment of it. In that particular respect, the provisions contained in the Soviet draft treaty were more satisfactory than those of the United States draft.

22. Both the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to think it was desirable that parties to the treaty should have the right to withdraw if certain events had jeopardized their supreme interests. As, however, the question whether a country's supreme interests were or were not jeopardized by any particular circumstance or development would be decided subjectively by the country itself, such a provision would in effect enable a nuclear State to withdraw from the treaty at any time. It would be better, perhaps, to insist that parties could not withdraw from the treaty unless certain events had jeopardized their security, as events affecting the security of a State were easier to evaluate objectively than events alleged to jeopardize its interests.

23. One serious defect in both draft treaties was the absence of firm guarantees, within the framework of the treaty itself, that the non-nuclear States would not in future be the object of nuclear attacks, or of nuclear threats, from the nuclear Powers. The Eighteen-Nation Committee should therefore consider whether all nuclear Powers could not collectively and individually undertake in the treaty, first, not to use nuclear weapons against any State party to the treaty which did not possess nuclear weapons, secondly, to refrain from the threat of nuclear attack against any State party to the treaty not possessing nuclear weapons, and thirdly, if called upon to do so, to come to the aid of any non-nuclear State party to the treaty which was the object of nuclear attack or was threatened with such an attack.

24. Mr. GARCIA DEL SOLAR (Argentina) said that efforts to reduce international tension could sometimes be advanced more by the arrival of the psychologically favourable moment than by weeks or years of patient negotiation; and the moment for an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons seemed now to have arrived. The draft treaties and draft resolutions on non-proliferation submitted by the United States and the Soviet Union revealed a greater degree of agreement than existed with regard to other measures aimed at the achievement of general and complete disarmament, such as the cessation of all nuclear testing and the establishment of denuclearized zones. Any formal differences between the proposals of the two great Powers which the First Committee lacked time to dispose of could be referred to other agencies specifically concerned with disarmament problems, such as the Eighteen-Nation Committee and the proposed world disarmament conference, if no agreement had been achieved by the date of its opening. Because of its universal character, such a conference might offer an opportunity for valuable contributions to a solution which were not possible in the United Nations or its subsidiary organs; moreover, it could give an indication of the extent to which the sincere desire of the great majority of States Members of the United Nations for the effective consolidation of peace was shared by other States.

25. Substantive differences between the United States and Soviet proposals, however, could not be settled in deliberative bodies. Although small and middle-sized Powers could and must do their share in efforts for the preservation of peace, the main burden of negotiation rested with the United States and the Soviet Union. The most conspicuous obstacle to agreement was the question of nuclear policy within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in relation to the Federal Republic of Germany. He hoped that the two great Powers would not permit the distrust born of the cold war to interfere with the conclusion of a treaty on non-proliferation.

26. Of the five nuclear Powers, only three had shown a clear desire to co-operate in bringing about agreement on non-proliferation; it was no accident that they were the three Powers whose nuclear and technological capacity far outweighed that of the others, and the same three nuclear Powers which had signed the partial test ban treaty. It might be argued that the policy of those three Powers was the product of self-interest, since a treaty on non-proliferation would perpetuate the monopoly of the present nuclear Powers. In the Argentine delegation's view, however, a policy of restraining nuclear expansion was far better for mankind than a policy of using nuclear armaments as a tool for increasing the strength of individual Powers in international negotiation. He therefore welcomed the initiative taken by Italy, which, though it was itself a potential nuclear Power, had proposed that unilateral declarations of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons should be made by all the countries of the world. Such declarations could do much to reduce the danger of nuclear contagion.

27. He also welcomed the Netherlands Government's expression of its willingness to assume, in connexion with the proposed denuclearization of Latin America,

the same obligations for Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles as would be assumed by the Latin American States. Similarly, he welcomed the practical proposal of the United States for the destruction of a quantity of nuclear weapons by that country and the Soviet Union and for the transfer to peaceful purposes of the 100,000 kilogrammes of fissionable material thus obtained.

28. He appreciated the difficulties raised by the fact that a treaty on non-proliferation involved different responsibilities for the nuclear and the non-nuclear Powers. The realities of the situation, however, made it imperative that an agreement should be reached. The signing of a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons would have highly beneficial effects on the climate of international relations and would do much to promote peaceful coexistence.

29. Mr. VIZCAINO LEAL (Guatemala) expressed satisfaction that the item under discussion had been placed on the agenda of the current session. If a nuclear holocaust was to be prevented, in a period of history which had rightly been called the era of the balance of terror, the proliferation of nuclear weapons must at all costs be halted. The world had heard declarations from countries which forswore the manufacture of such weapons and from countries which did not manufacture them or want them in their territories. In that connexion, mention should be made of the Italian draft unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons and of the studies being undertaken on the denuclearization of Latin America and Africa.

30. The two draft treaties which had been submitted pursued the same objective, and therefore constituted a first step towards negotiations offering real hope for positive progress. Because of the prevailing atmosphere of mistrust, however, the draft treaties had certain juridical shortcomings. The implementation of their provisions was left entirely to the good will of the contracting parties; in addition, although the drafts had been submitted to the United Nations they made no mention of the Organization. As the representative of Peru had said (1361st meeting), the international juridical order was of crucial importance to world peace. But unfortunately the international juridical order rested not only on the good will of States but also on its own inherent justice and the punishment of States which offended against it. According to modern legal thinking, a treaty was not legitimate if it benefited only the contracting parties. Indeed, treaties should not be signed if they were prejudicial to other members of the international community, or if they failed to offer a high degree of security—which could not be achieved if their implementation was left to the good will of the contracting parties. Both the draft treaties and the draft unilateral declaration should provide a sound basis for progress towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, under international control, and collective security, which was essential to disarmament.

31. His delegation wished to congratulate the Eighteen-Nation Committee on its efforts to promote the cause of general and complete disarmament. It hoped that that Committee would resume its delibera-

tions as soon as possible, and therefore supported the United States draft resolution (A/C.1/L.337).

32. The Guatemalan delegation had welcomed the statement made to the General Assembly by the United States representative (1334th plenary meeting) that the United States would be prepared to transfer 60,000 kg of fissionable material to peaceful uses if the Soviet Union agreed to transfer 40,000 kg, the fissionable material to be obtained by destroying nuclear weapons. It had also welcomed the offer made by the United States representative in the First Committee (1366th meeting) to destroy nuclear weapons under the supervision of observers and with guarantees against espionage, if the Soviet Union agreed to do the same. It was to be hoped that those proposals would be accepted; they demonstrated the sincerity with which one of the great Powers was striving to achieve disarmament.

33. Mr. CAVALLETTI (Italy) thanked the members of the Committee who had spoken favourably of the Italian Government's proposal for unilateral declarations of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons, and who had helped by their analysis to clarify the proposal and make it more acceptable. It was gratifying to see that a number of non-nuclear countries were prepared to take the initiative in halting the spread of nuclear weapons, providing an example to other non-nuclear States and exerting pressure on the nuclear Powers to speed the process of disarmament.

34. Some representatives had expressed the fear that the Italian proposal might divert attention from the conclusion of a general treaty on non-proliferation. To dispel any such fear, he pointed out that an explicitly stated aim of the proposed declaration was to facilitate and encourage international agreements to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and that the progress made towards such agreements would be taken into consideration by the declaring States in deciding whether to prolong their undertaking not to acquire nuclear weapons. Thus, the draft declaration encouraged the conclusion of a treaty on non-dissemination and underlined its importance.

35. The text of the declaration made clear the Italian Government's view that the proposed moratorium should be accompanied by measures of disarmament taken by the nuclear Powers themselves. That position reflected the desire of a number of non-nuclear States that their renunciation of nuclear weapons should not be an isolated measure with no corresponding sacrifice on the part of the nuclear Powers.

36. The actual steps towards nuclear disarmament that should be taken during the moratorium had been left unspecified in the draft declaration in order to permit full freedom of action to reach agreement wherever it proved to be possible. The importance and urgency of a total cessation of nuclear weapon tests had already been recognized; among the other suggestions that had been made, he was particularly interested in the United States proposal for the destruction of a number of nuclear bombs and was hopefully awaiting the response of the USSR delegation.

37. The Czechoslovak and Hungarian representatives had expressed some reservations with regard to the

Italian proposal; he hoped that a closer examination of the document and of his delegation's explanation would convince them that if the moratorium was widely accepted an appreciable improvement in the present situation would result.

38. He thanked the United States delegation for mentioning the Italian proposal in its draft resolution (A/C.1/L.337) as an interim measure which the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament should examine at the proper time, and he believed that the United States initiative reflected the wishes of most members of the First Committee.

39. His delegation was convinced that a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons could be concluded without too much delay; however, it would require a sincere effort of conciliation and understanding by all sides. The USSR draft resolution (A/C.1/L.338) seemed to imply that the USSR draft treaty must be accepted outright. He believed most delegations shared the Italian delegation's view that the Committee must seek a compromise solution which took the positions of all sides into account, and that no draft resolution could be acceptable if it sought to impose a rigid formula and did not facilitate the negotiations which were indispensable to agreement.

40. Mr. SHALLOUF (Libya) said that in view of the satisfactory answer to its previous question given by the United States representative at the 1366th meeting, his delegation now gave its full support to the United States draft treaty for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

41. The urgent need for all nations to work together to find solutions which would promote international peace had been stressed in the General Assembly by the representatives of Member States, by Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, and, in particular, had been emphasized by His Holiness Pope Paul VI. The Soviet representative had urged (1363rd meeting) that every effort should be devoted to speeding agreement on a treaty on non-proliferation. His delegation therefore hoped that a sincere endeavour would be made to reconcile the differences between the proposals of the United States and the Soviet Union, so that a compromise solution could be reached, as in the case of the partial test ban treaty. A solution to the problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons was not only vital for progress towards general and complete disarmament; it was also important to the success of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and all other United Nations agencies, and to the future of all countries throughout the world.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.