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Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

AGENDA ITEM 106

Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (*continued*)
(A/5976, A/5986-DC/227)

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. BURNS (Canada) said that, in beginning his remarks on the vital problem of preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons, he wished to quote certain passages from the memorandum on that subject submitted by the eight non-aligned countries of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament,^{1/} which showed that in the opinion of the eight countries in question a treaty or convention on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was not an end in itself but only a means to an end—the achievement of general and complete disarmament and, more particularly, nuclear disarmament. The eight delegations were therefore convinced that measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons should be coupled with or followed by tangible steps to halt the nuclear arms race and to limit, reduce and eliminate the stocks of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery.

2. At the moment there were two draft treaties on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons: one submitted by the United States on 17 August 1965^{2/} and one submitted by the Soviet Union on 24 September 1965 (A/5976). Since the spokesmen of those two countries had made detailed comments on the provisions of their respective treaties, he would confine himself to some comments on the differences of views about what constituted an adequate treaty which were revealed by the two documents.

3. Comparison of the first articles in the two drafts, specifying the obligations of the nuclear Powers which were parties to the treaty, showed that the aim of the Soviet draft was to prevent not only an increase in the number of nuclear Powers—a point on which both drafts coincided—but also the creation of new organizations, within alliances or other groups

of States, with the independent power to use nuclear weapons. In addition, the Soviet draft was designed to prohibit certain defensive arrangements which at present existed within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and under which nuclear weapon delivery vehicles of limited range could be used by allies of the United States to repel aggression. Since, however, the nuclear weapons themselves were kept in the close custody of the United States, which alone could authorize their use, the arrangements could not be regarded as encouraging the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, their abolition would benefit only the Soviet Union and its allies, since it would weaken NATO defences with no corresponding reduction in the immense destructive potentiality of the nuclear weapons possessed by the Soviet Union. The proposal set out in article I of the Soviet draft was therefore contrary to one of the principles for disarmament negotiations agreed jointly by the United States and the Soviet Union (A/4879) and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 1722 (XVI)—the principle that no measure of disarmament should confer a military advantage on any State or group of States. Consequently, that provision of the Soviet draft treaty could not serve as a basis for negotiations.

4. Contrary to the assertion of the Soviet Union, article I of the United States draft in no way authorized the dissemination of nuclear weapons to NATO countries.

5. It seemed obvious that lengthy negotiations between the countries concerned would be necessary before the two divergent views on the terms of article I and of article II, on the obligations of the non-nuclear States, could be reconciled. The problem was to draft and agree on a treaty which, while preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and more particularly the emergence of new independent nuclear States, would not inhibit the free political evolution of Europe and would preserve the right of all countries to enter into such political arrangements as they wished, including collective defence arrangements.

6. In his delegation's view, the Soviet draft was defective also in other respects. It contained no provision for verifying that the parties were in fact fulfilling their obligations, whereas the United States draft stated that the parties should co-operate in facilitating the application of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency—a provision which any nation that did not intend to manufacture nuclear weapons should be willing to accept. Article VI of the Soviet draft, concerning the right of any party to withdraw from the treaty, was too permissive; it would entitle any State party to the treaty to denounce it on the strength of unfounded rumours or mere morbid suspicions, without having to justify

^{1/} See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965*, document DC/227, annex 1, sect. E.

^{2/} *Ibid.*, sect. A.

its decision in any international forum, whereas the corresponding article in the United States draft obliged the party contemplating withdrawal to bring the matter to the attention of the Security Council. In addition, the same article in the United States draft gave non-nuclear States the opportunity not only to review the operation of the treaty after a certain number of years but also to assess whether the nuclear Powers had really achieved effective agreements to halt the nuclear arms race and to reduce armaments, including particularly nuclear arsenals, as provided in the preamble. If they had not, the non-nuclear States could decide not to be bound by the essentially one-sided obligations of the treaty.

7. Canada agreed with the non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee that it would be unfair to make non-nuclear States agree not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons unless the nuclear Powers on their side adopted measures in the near future to limit and reduce the stocks of nuclear weapons and vehicles, with a view to their ultimate elimination. On the other hand, Canada could not endorse the view that the nuclear Powers had no right to ask the non-nuclear States to undertake not to develop a nuclear arsenal while they themselves retained their nuclear weapons. Because the risk of nuclear war increased with the spread of weapons, the non-nuclear States would be acting in the interests of the entire international community by giving such an undertaking. In any event, a country which acquired nuclear weapons would not be effectively strengthening its security and would risk upsetting the balance of power on which world security today rested. The effect of its additional military nuclear capability would be to encourage neighbouring countries to acquire similar weapons to protect themselves, thus precipitating an arms race in the area, at fantastic cost to the countries concerned, without increasing the protection available to the country which had taken the first step. Moreover, an increase in the number of nuclear Powers would not improve the possibilities of effective agreements among the nuclear States to reduce nuclear arsenals but would tend to make nations consider the use of nuclear weapons in warfare to be normal and thus increase the risk of an all-out nuclear war between great Powers. The prestige conferred by the possession of nuclear weapons was the last reason to invoke in their favour; as His Holiness Pope Paul VI had reminded the General Assembly, pride was the root of many evils.

8. Also attached to the report of the Eighteen-Nation Committee was a draft of a unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons submitted by the Italian delegation,^{3/} inviting all States not having national control of nuclear weapons, and particularly those close to nuclear capability, to place a moratorium on the dissemination of atomic weapons, with the understanding that if no progress had been made towards denuclearization by the expiry of the time-limit, they could resume their freedom of action. The draft declaration was not intended to replace the United States draft treaty,

^{3/} *Ibid.*, sect. D.

which Italy had supported; it was intended to gain time and facilitate progress; it would be a unilateral manifestation of good will, without the character of a contractual commitment. The First Committee would doubtless consider the draft declaration as a possible way to move towards agreements on non-dissemination should it prove that the production of an effective treaty was likely to be long delayed.

9. Canada appreciated the recent efforts of African and Latin American countries to examine the feasibility of establishing nuclear-free zones in their respective regions, and believed that such arrangements could be useful if they took account of three principles: first, that any proposal for a nuclear-free zone should be acceptable to all the countries of the geographical area in which the zone would be located; secondly, that it should provide for arrangements for verifying that the commitments undertaken were carried out; and thirdly, that it should be consistent with the generally accepted principle that no disarmament measure should create a unilateral advantage for any State or group of States. Canada hoped that nuclear-free zones would be established before long in areas in which those principles applied.

10. His delegation believed that the non-nuclear and non-aligned nations' call for an agreement on non-proliferation to be accompanied by steps to halt the arms race and reduce nuclear stockpiles was just and reasonable; an undertaking on their part not to acquire nuclear weapons should indeed be balanced by an undertaking on the part of the nuclear States to take resolute steps towards disarmament. The United Kingdom had already decided two years earlier to end its production of U-235 for military purposes and to begin stopping its production of military plutonium; and the United States had long ago proposed a halt in the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and the beginning of a reduction in the stocks held by the two major nuclear Powers. In addition, the Eighteen-Nation Committee had in January 1964 had before it a proposal, later renewed, for a halt in the production of long-range nuclear weapon vehicles and in the development of new types. Lastly, in its programme of collateral measures presented to the General Assembly on 7 December 1964 (A/5827), the Soviet Union had called for the destruction of bombing aircraft. Unfortunately, those proposals had not been followed by any negotiations. His delegation was convinced that agreement on those measures—or, in fact, on any one of them—could go far to halt the arms race, reduce international tension and create favourable conditions for further steps towards the goal of general and complete disarmament; it believed that a way could be found out of the impasse if the great Powers agreed to effect some, and preferably all, of the collateral measures he had mentioned.

11. Another measure which could serve to offset the obligation not to acquire nuclear weapons would be to prohibit underground nuclear testing. That would complete the process of total abolition of nuclear testing and end the further elaboration of nuclear weapons whose destructiveness already defied the imagination. He recalled in that connexion that the Foreign Minister of Sweden, speaking in the

Assembly's general debate (1350th plenary meeting), had urged the coupling of measures designed to freeze present nuclear capabilities with measures designed to prevent additional countries from procuring some of that same military strength. Sweden had also proposed the establishment of a world-wide surveillance system involving the establishment of a network of technologically advanced seismological stations.^{4/} In the Canadian view, that proposal could help to close the gap which still existed between the nuclear Powers on that point and which was keeping them from an agreement to ban underground testing; Canada was most willing to participate in discussions on the formation of the Swedish-inspired "detection club".

12. His delegation favoured the holding of a world disarmament conference, subject to certain conditions. It was self-evident that if disarmament was to be general and complete, all nuclear Powers and potential nuclear Powers must take part at an appropriate stage in the negotiations. The Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs had expressed in the General Assembly his Government's hope that the People's Republic of China would be invited to take part in the disarmament discussions. A world disarmament conference could help to bring that about, but it was also evident that the convening of such a conference raised many difficult problems which should be solved in the Committee or in private consultations before the General Assembly adopted a final resolution. It would be necessary, in particular, to decide under whose auspices the conference would be held, who would issue the invitations, how the conference would be financed, what the agenda would be, what were the chances of prior agreement on the principles to serve as a basis for discussion and of agreement on procedural rules and, lastly, when and where the conference would be held. Unless the Committee could establish a substantial measure of agreement on those points, the prospects for holding a successful conference would appear to be very uncertain.

13. What must be done, therefore, was to think through clearly what was expected from a world disarmament conference and what its agenda should be. It would be in the highest degree irresponsible to proceed on the assumption that, as no progress had been made since the test ban treaty^{5/} and the other partial measures of 1963, all that was needed now was to pass a resolution calling for a world disarmament conference and then do nothing more about disarmament until the conference was held. Even if a respectable consensus could be established on how the problem should be solved or approached, the disarmament dialogue should continue pending the convening of the conference. The First Committee and the Eighteen-Nation Committee had before them measures intended to slow down, if not halt, the arms race and to reduce international tensions. Given certain changes—which were by no means impossible—in the policies of the great Powers, agreement could be reached on

those measures and the world conference could open in an encouraging atmosphere. For that reason, his delegation remained firmly convinced that whatever decision might be reached regarding a world conference, the disarmament negotiations must continue.

14. His delegation reserved the right to speak again when the specific disarmament items were discussed.

15. Mr. MBAH (Nigeria) said that at many international forums Nigeria had consistently directed attention to the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and had many times stressed the necessity of arresting their spread. Every moment of delay increased the danger that more countries would acquire such weapons; the "nuclear club" had in fact been compelled to admit more members. The failure to reach agreement in the last few years had made the task more complex and difficult; in no other aspect of disarmament had it been so well proved that time was of the essence. Yet the three nuclear Powers participating in the Geneva disarmament negotiations had long professed themselves not only convinced of the need for such an agreement but anxious for it.

16. It seemed that one of the obstacles to agreement was the military arrangements at present being contemplated by the NATO Powers. The Nigerian delegation had made its position clear on that issue: as the Nigerian representative had said in the Disarmament Commission on 11 May 1965,^{6/} each side must avoid, in the interest of humanity, any steps that could provoke the other to take counter-measures which would result in greater nuclear danger. The quantitative increase in nuclear armaments which could flow from a nuclear State's joining with non-nuclear allies in the build-up of special nuclear forces for the alliance was a source of concern to the Nigerian delegation, and it hoped that every effort would be made by those primarily concerned to remove all obstacles to an early agreement.

17. The Nigerian delegation had noted with great interest the two draft treaties proposed, one by the United States delegation at Geneva and the other by the Soviet delegation during the current session of the General Assembly. It was the more pleased with that development since it had suggested at Geneva the preparation of a draft treaty as a basis for negotiation. The two drafts tabled would undoubtedly further the work; at least they would help the Eighteen-Nation Committee to focus its attention on something concrete. Of course, it had to be noted that there were substantial differences in the approaches to the problem, but if the question was approached with the interest of humanity as the primary consideration, and if the points made by the non-nuclear Powers were borne in mind, then a solution could be found.

18. The Nigerian delegation shared the view that the draft treaty should be as watertight as possible. As the United Kingdom representative had said at the 225th meeting of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, on 19 August 1965, articles I and II of the United States draft treaty did leave open the possibility that an association of States might be set up with the

^{4/} *Ibid.*, sect. B.

^{5/} Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow on 5 August 1963 (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480 (1964), No. 6964).

^{6/} See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission*, 78th meeting.

capacity to make use of nuclear weapons by the decision of a majority of its members—in other words, without the veto of an existing nuclear Power. The Nigerian delegation thought, however, that the super-Powers viewed that problem in a somewhat myopic fashion. It was an undoubted fact that the problems of Central Europe were almost inextricably linked with disarmament problems, and that any undue disturbance of the present military balance, either in Central Europe or elsewhere, would have serious repercussions on world peace. When all that had been said, however, it would be wrong to approach the problem of proliferation from the sole angle of preoccupation with the maintenance of the *status quo* in Central Europe. A universal approach to the problem was not only advisable but inescapable, for a treaty on non-proliferation would impose heavier obligations on non-nuclear Powers than on the nuclear Powers, and it was safe to assume that no nuclear Power would willingly give nuclear weapons or the means for their manufacture to non-nuclear Powers. That was primarily a question of national self-interest; but the national interests of certain non-nuclear Powers might impel them to seek to acquire nuclear weapons so as to obtain the maximum possible security. Much too often the desire of non-nuclear Powers to acquire nuclear weapons had been explained away as a desire to acquire added prestige. That might be true in regard to certain countries, but the fact was that the fears of the non-nuclear Powers were genuine and had to be taken into account in any realistic approach to the problem of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The official position of the Nigerian Government was that the acquisition of nuclear weapons *per se* did not necessarily increase the security of States, and that non-nuclear States, especially States such as Nigeria which needed all their resources for the development of their economy, would be well advised not to embark on a course so fraught with danger. None the less, it was not difficult to conceive of a situation in which the people of a country might exercise great pressure for the acquisition of nuclear weapons in the belief that that would make them more secure from external threats.

19. There was so far no guarantee that the nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the nuclear Powers would not be used against non-nuclear States or that the latter would not be the victims of nuclear blackmail. An indispensable element in any non-proliferation measure, therefore, was a firm undertaking with adequate guarantees by the nuclear Powers not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear Powers in any circumstances whatsoever, or to threaten to use them. So long as no such safeguard existed, pressures would build up in the non-nuclear countries to acquire nuclear weapons.

20. The Nigerian delegation felt that strenuous efforts must be made to realize a number of additional objectives: a comprehensive test ban treaty and a cessation of all nuclear weapon tests in all environments and for all time; a strengthening of United Nations capacities to maintain peace in the world and to thwart aggression against any country small or great, non-nuclear or nuclear; a freeze on all

production of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery; and the initiation of definite action aimed at the destruction of the nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the present nuclear Powers.

21. The Nigerian delegation trusted that due note would be taken of the views contained in the joint memorandum on the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons submitted by the eight non-aligned delegations in the Eighteen-Nation Committee at Geneva. That document reflected the basic approach of those delegations to the problem.

22. Finally, the Nigerian delegation wished to draw attention, as it had done in the Disarmament Commission, to the possibility of the conclusion of an agreement designed to prevent nuclear Powers from giving, lending or selling bomber aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons to non-nuclear Powers and to prevent non-nuclear Powers from acquiring such aircraft by any means. The Nigerian delegation hoped to present a precise formulation on that subject at an appropriate time. It had no doubt that all countries genuinely desirous of halting the spread of nuclear weapons would give such a measure their support.

23. Mr. SHALLOUF (Libya) said that he had listened with great interest to the Secretary-General's appeal to all nations to seek agreement to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons and halt the nuclear arms race. The statements of the Soviet Union and the United States which had followed that appeal seemed to be a further step in the direction of agreement on general and complete disarmament. The Libyan delegation welcomed the United States statement that it regarded Africa as a nuclear-free zone. That attitude represented the wishes of the African peoples and was consistent with the resolutions adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African countries. Libya, which was not a nuclear Power, would support any effort that might lead to the signing of a treaty for the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons, as a first step towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty and a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

24. While his delegation supported the United States draft treaty, it would be pleased if the United States representative would give some clarification of paragraph 1 of article VI. The Libyan delegation welcomed the Italian draft of a unilateral declaration of non-acquisition of nuclear weapons but felt that unless the nuclear Powers were committed to the declaration it could not possibly be effective. The joint memorandum of the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee was regarded by the Libyan delegation as a step in the right direction. Finally, the Libyan delegation thanked Sweden for its efforts in connexion with the detection of underground nuclear explosions and the United Kingdom for its researches on techniques for distinguishing between earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions.

25. He would take the opportunity to clarify the Libyan delegation's position on the question of a comprehensive test ban treaty at an appropriate time.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.