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Agenda item 28

QUESTION OF CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS

Report of the First Committee

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1. The item entitled "Question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament" was included by the Secretary-General in the provisional agenda of the twenty-fifth session on the basis of General Assembly resolution 2603 (XXIV) of 16 December 1969.
2. At its 1843rd plenary meeting, on 18 September 1970, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include this item in the agenda and allocated it to the First Committee for consideration and report.
3. At its 1726th meeting, on 3 October, the First Committee decided to hold a combined general debate on all seven agenda items relating to disarmament allocated to it, namely:

- (1) Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (item 27);
- (2) Question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (item 28);
- (3) Urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests: report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (item 29);
- (4) Implementation of the results of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States: report of the Secretary-General (item 30);

- (5) Establishment, within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency, of an international service for nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes under appropriate international control: report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (item 31);
- (6) Status of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 2456 B (XXIII) concerning the signature and ratification of Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) (item 93);
- (7) Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security (item 94).

4. The general debate on these seven items took place at the 1748th to 1762nd meetings, from 2 to 16 November 1970.

5. The First Committee had before it, in connexion with agenda item 28, the following documents: (1) the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (A/8059); and (2) a letter dated 23 October 1970 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the President of the General Assembly (A/8136), submitting, on behalf of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the text of a revised draft convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on the destruction of such weapons.

6. On 6 November, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.526), which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 2603 B (XXIV) of 16 December 1969,

"Welcoming the work of Governments in pursuance of that resolution in acquainting public opinion of the report of the Secretary-General on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effects of their possible use,

"Noting the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization on health aspects of chemical and biological weapons,

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"Reaffirming the importance of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925,

"Conscious of the continuing need to maintain inviolate the Geneva Protocol and to ensure its universal application,

"Mindful of the conclusion of the report by the United Nations Secretary-General that the prospects for general and complete disarmament under effective international control and, hence, for peace throughout the world would brighten significantly if the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) agents intended for purposes of war were to end and if they were eliminated from all military arsenals,

"Recognizing the importance which the nations of the world attach to the search for effective measures to deal with the problems of chemical and biological weapons,

"1. Calls anew for the strict observance of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and urges all States which have not yet done so to accede to or ratify the Geneva Protocol;

"2. Welcomes the action of a number of States in the course of 1970 to become parties to the Geneva Protocol and, in particular, the accession or ratification of the Governments of Brazil, Ecuador, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Malta and Morocco;

"3. Takes note of the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, containing an account of the extensive discussions of all aspects of the problems of chemical and biological weapons, and the number of concrete and positive proposals put forward in the Committee on Disarmament in the search for effective ways of safeguarding and verifying any agreements in the field of chemical and biological weapons;

"4. Takes note in particular of:

(a) The revised draft Convention for the Prohibition of Biological Methods of Warfare submitted on 18 August 1970 to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (A/8059, CCD/255/Rev.2), incorporating an amendment suggested by the United States of America to extend the scope of its prohibitions to cover toxins and modified by a suggestion put forward by the Kingdom of the Netherlands;

(b) The revised draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and on the Destruction of Such Weapons submitted on 23 October 1970 to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session by Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/8136);

(c) The memorandum circulated in Geneva on 25 August 1970 by a group of twelve States members of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (A/8059, CCD/310) and the important and helpful contributions made by all delegations to the Conference;

(d) The useful working papers and expert views put forward in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament;

"5. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to give urgent consideration to reaching agreement on effective measures to deal with the problems of chemical and biological weapons, taking account of the proposals referred to above;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament all documents and records of the First Committee relating to questions connected with the problems of chemical and biological weapons;

"7. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to present a report on progress achieved to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session."

7. On 9 November, Hungary, Mongolia and Poland submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.527), which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 2454 A (XXIII) of 20 December 1968 and 2603 B (XXIV) of 16 December 1969,

"Having considered the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (A/8059),

"Noting that the report prepared by the United Nations Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2454 A (XXIII) with the assistance of consultant experts, on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effect of their possible use, and the report of the World Health Organization's group of consultants on health aspects of chemical and bacteriological weapons, underline the immense importance and urgency

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universally felt in regard to reaching agreement to halt the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and to achieve their effective elimination from the arsenals of weapons,

"Recognizing that prospects of international peace and security, as well as the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, would be enhanced if the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons were to end and if they were eliminated from all military arsenals,

"Conscious of the need to maintain inviolate the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous and Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and to ensure its universal applicability,

"Noting with satisfaction that in the forty-fifth anniversary year of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous and Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, several countries have ratified or acceded to the Protocol, pursuant to the appeals of the General Assembly, and additional countries have announced their intention to do so,

"Emphasizing the urgency of the need for achieving the earliest elimination of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons,

I

"1. Reaffirms its resolution 2162 B (XXI) of 5 December 1966 and calls anew for strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925;

"2. Invites all States which have not yet done so to accede to or ratify the Geneva Protocol;

II

"1. Takes note of the draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and on the Destruction of such Weapons submitted to the General Assembly by the delegations of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/8136) and of the draft Convention for the Prohibition of Biological Methods of Warfare submitted to the Conference of

the Committee on Disarmament by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (A/8059, CCD/255/Rev.2), as well as other proposals, including the Joint Memorandum on the Question of Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Methods of Warfare submitted at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sweden, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia (A/8059, CCD/310);

"2. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to give urgent consideration to reaching agreement on a complete prohibition and elimination of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons;

"3. Considers that such an agreement should provide for joint and full prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the exclusion of these means of warfare from the arsenals of States through their destruction or diversion for peaceful uses;

"4. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to submit a report on progress on all aspects of the problems of the prohibition and elimination of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session;

"5. Appeals to all States, pending agreement on a complete ban of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons to take all the necessary steps to facilitate and achieve at the earliest possible time such a prohibition and elimination of these weapons;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament all documents and records of the First Committee relating to questions connected with the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons."

8. On 13 November, Argentina, Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sweden, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.533), subsequently co-sponsored by Tunisia. The text of this resolution was introduced by the representative of Yugoslavia at the 1765th meeting, on 19 November.

9. At the same meeting, it was announced that the draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom and the one submitted by Hungary, Mongolia and Poland (A/C.1/L.527) would not be pressed to the vote by their sponsors.

10. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.533) by a vote of 94 to none, with 3 abstentions (see paragraph 11 below).

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RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

11. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons

The General Assembly,

Mindful of the increasing concern of the international community over developments in the field of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons,

Recalling its resolutions 2454 A (XXIII) of 20 December 1968 and 2603 B (XXIV) of 16 December 1969,

Having considered the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament,^{1/}

Noting the report prepared by the United Nations Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2454 A (III), with the assistance of consultant experts, on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and the effect of their possible use,^{2/} and the report of the World Health Organization's group of consultants on health aspects of chemical and bacteriological weapons,^{3/}

Deeply convinced that the prospects of international peace and security, as well as the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, would be enhanced if the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) agents for the purpose of war were to end and if those agents were eliminated from all military arsenals,

Conscious of the need to maintain inviolate the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous and Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare,^{4/} signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and to ensure its universal applicability,

Conscious of the urgent need for all States that have not already done so to accede to the Geneva Protocol of 1925,

1/ A/8059.

2/ A/7575/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.69.I.24).

3/ World Health Organization, "Health Effects of Possible Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons", 21 November 1969.

4/ A/7575/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.69.I.24), annex VI.

1. Reaffirms its resolution 2162 B (XXI) of 5 December 1966 and calls anew for the strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare;

2. Invites all States that have not already done so to accede to or ratify the Geneva Protocol;

3. Takes note of:

(a) The revised draft Convention for the Prohibition of Biological Methods of Warfare,^{5/} submitted on 18 August 1970 to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

(b) The revised draft Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and on the Destruction of Such Weapons,^{6/} submitted on 23 October 1970 to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session by Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

(c) The working papers, expert views and suggestions put forward in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and in the First Committee of the General Assembly;

4. Takes further note of the joint memorandum on the question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare,^{7/} submitted on 25 August 1970 to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament by Argentina, Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sweden, the United Arab Republic and Yugoslavia;

5. Commends the following basic approach, contained in the joint memorandum, for reaching an effective solution to the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare:

^{5/} A/8059 - DC/233, annex C, document CCD/255/Rev.2.

^{6/} A/8136.

^{7/} A/8059 - DC/233, annex C, document CCD/310.

(a) It is urgent and important to reach agreement on the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare;

(b) Both chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons should continue to be dealt with together in taking steps towards the prohibition of their development, production and stockpiling and their effective elimination from the arsenals of all States;

(c) The issue of verification is important in the field of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, and that verification should be based on a combination of appropriate national and international measures, which would complement and supplement each other, thereby providing an acceptable system that would ensure the effective implementation of the prohibition;

6. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to continue its consideration of the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare, with a view to prohibiting urgently the development, production and stockpiling of those weapons and of their elimination from the arsenals of all States;

7. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to submit a report on the results achieved to the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament all documents and records of the First Committee relating to questions connected with the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare.
