

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.311
6 July 1967
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH MEETING
held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 6 July 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. P. Winkler

(Czechoslovakia)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A.F. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. T. DAMIANOV
Mr. D. KOSTOV

Burma:

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE
Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. E. FRANCO
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTANEDA
Miss E. AGUIRRE

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO

Poland:

Mr. J. GOLDBLAT
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. A. COROIANU
Mr. C. MITRAN
Mr. M. BUHOARA

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL
Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN
Mr. U. ERICSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. V.P. SUSLOV
Mr. I.M. PALENYKH

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF
Mr. A. OSMAN
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. G. BUNN
Mr. C.G. BREAM
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Czechoslovakia): I declare open the three hundred and eleventh plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. BURNS (Canada): We all hope that we shall shortly be able to conclude a non-proliferation treaty; and that will be a most important step on the road to disarmament. We are all agreed, I think, that we must give first priority at this Conference to non-proliferation when we have further material to discuss. However, there are other problems linking peace and disarmament which are perhaps more dangerous to peace in the immediate future -- and I underline "in the immediate future" -- than the possibility of some more nations acquiring nuclear weapons.

3. In several parts of the world we see hot competition between neighbouring States in obtaining conventional armaments; and these are minor, or not so minor, arms races. We have just witnessed the devastating events which have followed one such race. The problems posed by conventional arms races are exceedingly complicated and have important ramifications for very many countries. But we do not need to consider them insoluble if we consider the problem of general disarmament soluble. The Canadian delegation would like to put before the Committee its view of some of the factors involved, and also to recall to members some views which have been expressed in other places.

4. After the First World War there was a simplistic theory which attributed much of the tension, suspicion and war-mongering in the world to the subterranean villainies of "merchants of death". Those "merchants of death" were the private entrepreneurs, whether manufacturers or salesmen of armaments, who were motivated by the hope of profit. But nowadays we see that most conventional arms races are supported by gifts of armaments, or sales of armaments at bargain prices, by governments or under the auspices of governments. This provision of war material -- which might be called fuelling the arms race -- sometimes appears to be undertaken in order to increase the influence of one or another great Power with the country to which the armaments are delivered. In other cases, arms are supplied to "correct the balance" when one of the potential adversaries in the region appears

(Mr. Burns, Canada)

to be gaining a superiority in certain armaments. An objective observer might conclude that the basis of such arms races is the notion of spheres of influence of the great Powers -- and this, as we know, is a notion which non-aligned nations find obnoxious, in principle at any rate.

5. Our Conference has been sitting here for the last six years, with our principal goal stated as reaching agreement on general and complete disarmament. And all this time arms races have been going on in various quarters of the globe. Have we considered recently what the "complete" in "general and complete disarmament" means? It means that all armaments shall be eliminated in every nation except those needed for maintaining internal order. The point is made in article I, paragraph 1 of the Soviet Union draft treaty. It is proposed there that the States party to the treaty would undertake obligations for --

"The elimination of all types of conventional armaments and military equipment ... except ... limited quantities of agreed types of light firearms for the equipment of the police (militia) contingents to be retained by States after the accomplishment of general and complete disarmament". (ENDC/2/Rev.1, p.2)

The United States "Outline of Basic Provisions of a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World" contains somewhat similar provisions (ENDC/30 and Corr.1 and Add.1, 2, 3).

6. Can it be maintained that the police function requires tanks mounting 100 mm. guns and squadrons of jet fighter-bomber aircraft? Should the great Powers which manufacture such costly and elaborate armaments distribute them to less-developed countries? Experience in many areas shows that possession of such armaments frequently tempts generals and colonels to conduct lightning revolutions. Concentrated power is in their hands, and they can overthrow constituted authority more rapidly than when their armament was rifles and a few cannon. Is acquirement of "sophisticated" armament progress -- I mean, is it progress in maintaining internal order in a nation?

7. It is certainly not in accord with the goal of general and complete disarmament to proliferate heavy and elaborate conventional armaments in regions where there are dangerous international tensions -- or in any other region for that

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matter. We may hear objections to the idea of restricting the arms traffic; for example, that this would not be disarmament and that therefore controls should not be imposed. This is the same argument that has been advanced at times against a treaty for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Our object in these negotiations, of course, is disarmament, but it should be non-armament as well -- defining "non-armament" as the prevention of the increase of armaments. There is not much sense in providing various countries with heavy armament if they are expected soon to divest themselves of it.

8. At the last two sessions of the United Nations General Assembly there was vigorous debate on the question of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States. It produced an almost unanimously-approved resolution (2225 (XXI)). If the provisions of that resolution were followed by all States we should have a much better outlook for peace and disarmament than we have at the present time. The Canadian delegation wonders whether the principle of non-intervention could not be extended to non-intervention by outside Powers -- and that means great Powers -- in the affairs of regions. Specifically, could there be a stop to intervention by the supply of arms?

9. I have heard it suggested that what we might need is an agreement on the non-dissemination of conventional weapons. The urgent need to check the races in conventional armaments should have been made clear to all by recent events. There is first of all the danger of "the scourge of war" falling on the inhabitants of the countries engaged in an arms race. But in addition there is the danger that if the situation in an area of tension deteriorates it might grow into open conflict between the major Powers which have been supplying arms to the local hostile States. Mr. Pardo, the representative of Malta, in arguing the case for a measure of armaments control before the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on 1 December 1965, said on this point:

"These arms races which affect large areas of the under-developed world are always dangerous in that not only do they tend to render unstable local balances of power but also, often, may be a prelude to the direct involvement and even confrontation between major military Powers." (A/C.1/PV.1392, p.18)

(Mr. Burns, Canada)

10. The International Herald Tribune of 27 June 1967 reported at its page 3 an interesting statement by Senator Frank Church in the United States Senate in which he called for an end to "arsenal diplomacy". Among other things, Senator Church was quoted by the newspaper as saying, --

"The United States, since the end of World War II, has doled out \$32 million in military aid to the Arab nations which attacked Israel".

The report continued:

"Israel got \$28 million worth of U.S. arms, Senator Church said, in what he described as an attempt to 'exercise a restraining influence by a judicious distribution of our weapons'".

11. Referring also to the Pakistani-Indian conflict, the newspaper reports, Senator Church went on: "'Both of these tragic wars illustrate the folly of the thesis that the United States can defuse arms races by supplying weapons'". He said that the United States had handed out a "staggering total" of about \$37 billion in arms aid since 1950.

12. It has been frequently stated that the Soviet Union has given or sold arms to the Arab States to the amount of several billions of dollars. Senator Church said arms aid and arms purchases by foreign nations have "drained billions of dollars away from possible aid which could have improved living conditions and stimulated economic expansion".

13. Perhaps the best way to deal with the problem -- if the States affected were willing -- would be that suggested in this passage of President Johnson's message to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament of 27 January 1966:

"We suggest therefore that countries, on a regional basis, explore ways to limit competition among themselves for costly weapons often sought for reasons of illusory prestige. The initiative for arrangements of this kind should, of course, come from the regions concerned. The interested countries should undertake not to acquire from any source, including production of their own as well as importation from others, military equipment which they proscribe." (ENDC/165, p.3)

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14. At our meeting on 18 August 1966 Mr. Ifjewe, then representing Nigeria, made the following very pertinent comment on President Johnson's proposal:

"Nowhere in the world is there a more urgent need to implement that proposal than on the continent of Africa, where most of the countries are engaged with all the limited resources at their command in the grim battle against poverty. They have very little or nothing to spare for the purchase of arms; but there are quite a few countries of that continent today actively engaged in the arms race and creating as a result an atmosphere of fear and anxiety. My delegation believes that this problem should be tackled simultaneously from two sides. The African countries themselves should initiate discussions on how to check the inflow of arms into the continent; and the supplying countries should exercise restraint and show a greater sense of proportion in the matter." (ENDC/PV.283, p.13)

15. We have the encouraging precedent that the States of Latin America have agreed on a treaty to constitute a nuclear-free zone in their territories (ENDC/186). It might be that in certain delimited areas of the world -- perhaps in Latin America also -- States could agree to impose restrictions on the kinds of conventional armaments with which their armed forces would be equipped.

16. While an autonomous renunciation would be the best solution, the ideal unfortunately is not always possible. Not only the States receiving armaments but the great Powers supplying them, it would seem, have to take a share in solving the problem if it is to be solved. One might well apply to the problem of the control of conventional arms races these words which Chairman Kosygin used in a general sense in his speech to the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 19 June 1967:

"Much depends on the efforts of the big Powers. It would be good if their delegations as well found a common language in order to reach decisions meeting the interests of peace in the Middle East and the interests of universal peace." (A/PV.1526, p.23)

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17. Mr. Paul Martin, Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, said the following in his statement to the Emergency Session on 23 June:

"There are other possible areas of co-operation between the permanent members which remain to be explored. One would be an agreement to control the flow of arms to the Middle East. An all-important by-product of such an arrangement would be the application to economic and social development of some of the resources otherwise spent on maintaining substantial armed forces. It seems self-evident that shipments of food are more important than shipments of arms. The Canadian Government for its part will continue its policy and practice of not sending military supplies to the countries directly involved in this dispute." (A/PV.1533, p.51)

I may add that the Canadian Government follows a general policy of not selling armaments to countries in regions where there are tensions imminently dangerous to peace.

18. I think we must all concede that it is likely to be some time before agreement is reached on a treaty of general disarmament, or even on a treaty of world-wide application providing for the reduction of conventional arms. That being the case, I see no reason why the Committee should not concern itself with interim measures which would at least permit us to initiate the process of checking the race to acquire conventional arms. One such measure which in principle commends itself to my Government forms part of President Johnson's Five-Point Programme for Peace in the Middle East, as enunciated in his speech to educators at a State Department Conference on 19 June 1967. He said:

"... this last conflict has demonstrated the danger of the Middle East arms race in the last twelve years, hence the responsibility must not rest only on those in the area -- but upon the larger States outside. We believe that scarce resources are better used for technical and economic development. We have always opposed this arms race, and our own military shipments to the area have been very limited ... As a beginning, we propose that the United Nations should call upon its members to report all shipments of military arms to the area".

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I suggest that the President's proposal could be extended and made applicable to other areas as well as the Middle East. The proposal could be implemented with relatively little delay, given acceptance by the great Powers.

19. It might be useful to take a few moments to bring to the Committee's attention some of the historical antecedents of the proposal. I shall quote from a draft resolution submitted by the delegation of Malta in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly at its twentieth session. I have already referred in this speech to the initiative taken by the Maltese at that time. The third paragraph of the preamble of their draft resolution states:

"Recognizing that such publicity would improve the possibility of making progress towards the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control,";

and its fourth paragraph states:

"Recalling that a 'Yearbook on the Trade in Arms, Ammunition and Implements of War' was published by the League of Nations". (A/C.1/L.347)

20. Some of the representatives here will recall that that Maltese draft resolution was only defeated by a narrow margin; and I think it might be said that its defeat was due mainly to a lack of consultation prior to its introduction, and to lack of time to debate it as it came up towards the end of the session. There were not many objections raised to the principles embodied in it.

21. While the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament has been seized of the task of agreeing on a treaty for general and complete disarmament, we have not been requested by the General Assembly to make a study of the particular matter which I have been discussing. Is this a problem to whose solution the Eighteen-Nation Committee should properly address itself and, if so, how could it be dealt with? The Canadian delegation would appreciate hearing the views of our colleagues on this subject.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 311th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Pavel Winkler, representative of Czechoslovakia.

"A statement was made by the representative of Canada.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 11 July 1967, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.