

Dual distribution

Third session

PROHIBITION OF THE ATOMIC WEAPON AND REDUCTION
BY ONE-THIRD OF THE ARMAMENTS AND ARMED FORCES OF
THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCILReport of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Selim SÄRPER (Turkey)

1. The General Assembly, at its 147th meeting, on 28 September 1948, decided to refer to the First Committee for consideration and report the item on its agenda entitled: "Prohibition of the atomic weapon and reduction by one-third of the armaments and armed forces of the permanent members of the Security Council: item proposed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

2. The First Committee considered this item during its 153rd-169th, 194th and 196th-199th meetings.

3. During the consideration of the question at the 153rd to 160th meetings, several draft resolutions and amendments were introduced. The essential points of their substance are as follows:

(a) The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presented a draft resolution (A/658) proposing that the permanent members of the Security Council, as a first step in the reduction of armaments and armed forces, reduce by one-third during one year all present land, naval, and air forces; and that atomic weapons be prohibited as weapons intended for aims of aggression and not for those of defence. It also called for the establishment within the framework of the Security Council, of an international control body for the purpose of the supervision of and control over the implementation of the measures for the reduction of armaments and armed forces and for the prohibition of atomic weapons.

(b) The representative of Syria introduced a draft resolution (A/C.1/318) calling upon the Security Council to continue its study on the regulation and reduction of armaments through its Commission for Conventional Armaments with a view to achieving concrete results in implementing Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Charter.

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/(c) The representative

(c) The representative of the United Kingdom submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/319) proposing that the General Assembly endorse the general principles considered by the majority of the Commission for Conventional Armaments as necessary to the regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces, and urging all nations, particularly those constituting the minority in the Commission for Conventional Armaments, to co-operate to the utmost of their power in the attainment of the objectives outlined in the resolution.

(d) The representative of El Salvador submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/320) proposing that the General Assembly entrust the Atomic Energy Commission with the study of the problem of the reduction of armaments and request it to begin such a study as soon as it has successfully completed its work concerning the control of atomic energy.

(e) The representative of Lebanon proposed (A/C.1/321/Corr.1) to institute, within the framework of the Security Council, an organ of international control having as its mission the supervision of the application of measures for the reduction of armaments and armed forces, it being understood that the affirmative vote of all the permanent members of the Security Council would not be required for the decisions of the Council. He also proposed that the permanent members of the Council take the initiative in the reduction of armaments by reducing by one-third, in the course of one year, all land, naval and air forces at their disposal, the basis for calculation being the strength of their respective forces and armaments in 1945.

(f) The representative of Australia proposed (A/C.1/322) that a sub-committee be set up to examine all proposals and amendments submitted to the First Committee and their practicability, and to indicate what further studies were necessary and might profitably be undertaken and the body which should conduct them. The proposed sub-committee would be directed not to consider atomic weapons inasmuch as this question was already being considered by the Committee.

(g) The representative of Belgium presented (A/C.1/323) certain deletions and additions to the United Kingdom draft resolution.

(h) The representative of Brazil submitted an amendment (A/C.1/324) to the Australian draft resolution concerning the terms of reference of the sub-committee.

(i) The representative of France presented a draft resolution (A/C.1/325) proposing that the Security Council should:

(1) Establish a control system on the following bases:

(a) Setting up of an organ endowed with appropriate powers for the control of conventional armaments;

- (b) Transmission by States to the control organ at periodic intervals of declarations of their effectives and their conventional armaments;
- (c) The Control of such declarations by the organ so set up, by means of checking of items on the spot;
- (d) Publication by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the declarations received;

- (2) Promote a general limitation of armaments by a progressive and balanced reduction of effectives and of conventional armaments.

4. In order to examine these proposals and amendments and to attempt to agree upon a text of an appropriate draft, the First Committee, at its 160th meeting on 13 October 1948, established a sub-committee composed of the representatives of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, El Salvador, France, Lebanon, Poland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and United States of America.

5. The Sub-Committee elected as its Chairman the representative of Australia, Colonel W.R. Hodgson and, as Rapporteur, the representative of Brazil, Mr. Henrique de Souza Gomes.

6. The Sub-Committee held ten meetings, and on 28 October unanimously approved its report to the First Committee (A/C.1/356/Rev.1). As a result of the discussion of the various draft resolutions and amendments introduced in the First Committee and of the amendments and a new draft resolution (A/C.1/SC.12/1-4) subsequently submitted in the Sub-Committee, three proposals were voted upon and included in the report of the Sub-Committee:

(a) The USSR draft resolution (A/658), with a revised text of the last paragraph (A/C.1/SC.12/3) proposing the establishment, within the framework of the Security Council, of an international control body to which full official data on the state of the armaments and armed forces of the permanent members of the Security Council must be submitted.

(b) The amended text of the Belgian amendment (A/C.1/SC.12/2) to the French draft resolution (A/C.1/325) calling upon the Security Council to pursue the study of the regulation and reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces through the agency of the Commission for Conventional Armaments in order to obtain concrete results as soon as the improvement in the international atmosphere permits. It also proposed that the Commission for Conventional Armaments, in carrying out its plan of work, should devote its attention first to formulating proposals for the receipt, checking and publication, by an international organ of control endowed with universally accepted powers, of full information to be supplied by Member States with regard to their effectives and their conventional armaments.

(c) The Polish draft resolution to the Sub-Committee, which proposed that the permanent members of the Security Council take the initiative in the reduction of armaments by reducing by one-third in the course of one year, all land, naval and air forces at their disposal, the basis for calculation being the strength of their respective forces and armaments as of 1 January 1948. It recommended the prohibition of atomic weapons as weapons of aggression intended for mass destruction of peaceful populations. It also proposed to institute, within the framework of the Security Council, an International control body having as its mission the supervision and control of the application of measures for the reduction of armaments and armed forces, it being understood that the affirmative vote of all the representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council would not be required for the adoption of decisions by the international control body concerning checking and inspection by that body. The international control body should be furnished with full official data concerning the state of the armaments and armed forces of the permanent members of the Security Council.

7. On 11 November, the Rapporteur presented the report of the Sub-Committee to the First Committee at its 194th meeting. During the subsequent consideration of the report by the First Committee, several amendments were submitted to the Belgian proposal:

(a) The representative of Syria proposed to substitute the words "as soon as possible" for the words in the sixth paragraph "as soon as the improvement in the international atmosphere permits;". He also proposed to delete in the seventh paragraph the words "endowed with universally accepted powers".

(b) The representative of Australia proposed to delete in the sixth paragraph the words "in order to obtain concrete results as soon as the improvement in the international atmosphere permits;".

(c) The representative of France proposed to substitute in the seventh paragraph the words "within the framework of the Security Council" for the words "endowed with universally accepted powers".

8. At the 199th meeting on 13 November, the draft resolution proposed by the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was voted upon paragraph by paragraph with the following results:

Paragraph 1 was rejected by 35 votes to 6, with 8 abstentions.

Paragraph 2 was rejected by 34 votes to 6, with 9 abstentions.

Paragraph 3 was rejected by 20 votes to 7, with 22 abstentions.

Paragraph 4 was rejected by 20 votes to 12, with 17 abstentions.

Paragraph 5 was rejected by 35 votes to 6, with 8 abstentions.

Paragraph 6 was rejected by 35 votes to 6, with 8 abstentions.

Paragraph 7 was rejected by 36 votes to 6, with 7 abstentions.

Paragraph 8 was rejected by 30 votes to 7, with 11 abstentions.

The entire draft resolution was rejected by 35 votes to 6, with 7 abstentions.

9. The amended Belgian amendment to the French draft resolution was voted upon paragraph by paragraph; the results of the vote were as follows:

Paragraph 1 was adopted by 40 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 2 was adopted by 40 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 3 was adopted by 40 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 4 was adopted by 40 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

Paragraph 5. The Australian amendment was rejected by 21 votes to 14, with 2 abstentions. This paragraph, as amended by the representative of Syria, was adopted by 22 votes to 7, with 12 abstentions.

Paragraph 6, as amended by the representative of France, was adopted by 33 votes to 6, with 8 abstentions. The Syrian amendment was consequently withdrawn.

Paragraph 7 was adopted by 40 votes to 6, with 2 abstentions.

Paragraph 8 was adopted by 39 votes to 6, with 2 abstentions.

The entire draft resolution was adopted by 40 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.

10. The draft resolution proposed by the representative of Poland was voted upon paragraph by paragraph with the following results:

Paragraph 1 was rejected by 28 votes to 6, with 10 abstentions.

Paragraph 2 was rejected by 22 votes to 9, with 15 abstentions.

Paragraph 3 was rejected by 24 votes to 6, with 16 abstentions.

Paragraph 4 was rejected by 18 votes to 7, with 19 abstentions.

Paragraph 5 was rejected by 32 votes to 6, with 5 abstentions.

Paragraph 6 was rejected by 31 votes to 6, with 6 abstentions.

Paragraph 7 was rejected by 29 votes to 7, with 8 abstentions.

Paragraph 8 was rejected by 27 votes to 6, with 9 abstentions.

In view of the fact that none of the paragraphs was adopted, the Committee decided, by 23 votes in favour to 11 against, with 5 abstentions, not to vote on the entire Polish draft resolution.

11. The Committee therefore recommends the adoption by the General Assembly of the following draft resolution:

PROHIBITION OF THE ATOMIC WEAPON AND REDUCTION BY ONE-THIRD
OF THE ARMAMENTS AND ARMED FORCES OF THE PERMANENT MEMBERS
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

DESIRING to establish relations of confident collaboration between the States within the framework of the Charter and to make possible a

general reduction of armaments in order that humanity may in future be spared the horrors of war and that the peoples may not be overwhelmed by the continually increasing burden of military expenditure,

CONSIDERING that no agreement is attainable on any proposal for the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces so long as each State lacks exact and substantiated information concerning the conventional armaments and armed forces of other States, so long as no convention has been concluded regarding the types of military forces to which such reduction would apply, and so long as no organ of control has been established,

CONSIDERING that the aim of the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces can only be attained in an atmosphere of real and lasting improvement in international relations, which implies in particular the application of control of atomic energy involving the prohibition of the atomic weapon,

BUT NOTING on the other hand that this renewal of confidence would be greatly encouraged if States were placed in possession of precise and verified data as to the level of their respective conventional armaments and armed forces,

RECOMMENDS the Security Council to pursue the study of the regulation and reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces through the agency of the Commission for Conventional Armaments in order to obtain concrete results as soon as possible;

TRUSTS that the Commission for Conventional Armaments, in carrying out its plan of work, will devote its first attention to formulating proposals for the receipt, checking and publication, by an international organ of control within the framework of the Security Council, of full information to be supplied by Member States with regard to their effectives and their conventional armaments;

INVITES the Security Council to report to it no later than its next regular session on the effect given to the present recommendation with a view to enabling it to continue its activity with regard to the regulation of armaments in accordance with the purposes and principles defined by the Charter;

INVITES all nations in the Commission for Conventional Armaments to co-operate to the utmost of their power in the attainment of the above-mentioned objectives.
