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*Chairman:* Miss Angie E. BROOKS (Liberia).

**Consideration of the agenda of the twenty-fourth session  
and allocation of items (*continued*)**

**REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL  
ITEM IN THE AGENDA: ITEM PROPOSED BY THE  
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS (A/7654)**

1. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to the request by his Government (A/7654) for the inclusion in the agenda, as an important and urgent question, of an item entitled "The strengthening of international security". In his address to the General Assembly on 19 September 1969, the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, had explained the great importance of the question and the need for an early debate and prompt action on it by the General Assembly during the current session (see 1756th plenary meeting, para. 137).

2. A draft appeal to all States of the world on the strengthening of international security had been annexed to the request for the item's inclusion in the agenda.

3. The Soviet initiative was motivated by current trends in the development of international relations, which required the United Nations to step up its efforts to discharge its fundamental responsibility under the Charter—the maintenance of international peace and security. The suppression of national liberation movements, the threat of international conflicts and the development of increasingly destructive weapons of war made it imperative that action to strengthen peace and security should be intensified.

4. He commended the proposed item to the General Committee and urged that it should be allocated to the First Committee.

5. Mr. NEWLIN (United States of America) said that his delegation would not oppose the inclusion of the item. His Government believed in free debate and had traditionally adopted a liberal attitude with regard to agenda items proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly. The item was worthy of consideration, whatever its defects, provided it reflected a sincere desire to reach agreement, and the United States delegation was prepared to enter into any discussion, with the Soviet delegation in particular, if there was a serious attitude on the other side.

6. The strengthening of international security was central to the purposes of the United Nations and the efforts of its membership. The subject should be considered with the seriousness and objectivity it deserved. International security could not be strengthened by mere words or by the adoption of rigid, partisan positions. In that connexion, he recalled the observations made by the President of the United States in his address to the General Assembly on 18 September 1969 (1755th plenary meeting).

7. The document containing the Soviet request used wording which caused his delegation some misgivings as to the purpose of the item. Many of the subjects which had been suggested for discussion under the new item were already on the agenda of the General Assembly, for example, colonial questions, the definition of aggression, the principles of friendly relations among States and United Nations peace-keeping operations. He would be glad to hear how the Soviet delegation intended to avoid a repetition of the debate on those subjects. His delegation would of course give serious study to other ideas suggested for consideration under the new item and not already covered in the agenda; in particular it would be glad to learn what specific concepts underlay the reference to regional security systems.

8. His delegation was somewhat apprehensive about some of the phraseology used in the Soviet request. Everyone was familiar with the practice of using words like "peace-loving" as a launching platform for political propaganda against other Member States. He hoped that it would not be used for that purpose.

9. If the question of strengthening international security was to be approached impartially, the suggestion regarding the withdrawal of troops from occupied territories should be applied equally to every region of the world.

*The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item entitled "The strengthening of international security" should be included in the agenda and that it should be allocated to the First Committee.*

**REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM IN THE AGENDA: ITEM PROPOSED 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/7655)**

10. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to the request by the delegations of the socialist countries for the inclusion in the agenda, as an important and urgent matter, of an item entitled "Conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on the destruction of such weapons" (A/7655). A draft international convention was annexed to the request.

11. The adoption of measures to eliminate such weapons was becoming increasingly urgent. Recent exchanges of views among delegations to the General Assembly showed how much importance Member States attached to the matter. The destructive capacity of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons was steadily increasing, and several countries were accelerating their development, production and stockpiling. By discussing the item, the Assembly would take a further step, following those taken at the twenty-first and twenty-third sessions (resolutions 2162 B (XXI) and 2454 A (XXIII), respectively), towards eliminating the threat of chemical and bacteriological warfare. Under the resolutions adopted at those previous sessions, States had been exhorted to observe the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and to accede to it if they had not already done so. The Protocol had set up a serious obstacle to the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons in time of war, as had been confirmed by the experience of the Second World War. The goal now was to secure the complete elimination of those barbarous weapons from the arsenals of States. He commended the proposed item to the Committee and requested that it should be allocated to the First Committee as a separate item.

12. Mr. WARNER (United Kingdom) said that his delegation favoured the inclusion of the proposed item but would like to make certain that its discussion was as fruitful and business-like as possible. The agenda already contained an item which dealt with chemical and bacteriological (biological) warfare. Item 29 entitled "Question of general and complete disarmament", sub-item (a) entitled "Report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament" covered matters concerning chemical and bacteriological (biological) warfare, including a draft convention submitted at Geneva by the United Kingdom Government; sub-item (b) entitled "Report of the Secretary-General" called for consideration of a report which was entirely concerned with the question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) warfare. He proposed that the new item should be included as sub-item (c) of item 29. That would avoid duplication of debate and ensure that all aspects of the problem and all the relevant work already done within the United Nations framework were taken into account.

13. Mr. KUŁAGA (Poland) said that his delegation considered that the draft convention submitted by the sponsors

was a logical sequel to the work done so far in the United Nations to ensure the total elimination of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. The purpose of the draft convention was to eliminate for all time the threat of the use of such weapons. Adoption of the draft convention would also be an important step towards general and complete disarmament.

14. In view of the obvious importance and urgency of the question, and the possibility of achieving real progress on it, he urged that it should be considered by the First Committee as a separate item.

15. Mr. BUFFUM (United States of America) said that his delegation would support the inclusion of the item. However, the subject could be dealt with most efficiently within the context of the total programme of work assigned to the First Committee.

16. The question was not new in the United Nations. Indeed, the Secretary-General's report (A/7575) to which sub-item (b) of item 29 referred dealt exclusively with chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. It would be noted that the report was also being transmitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. The report of that Committee<sup>1</sup> also contained certain proposals on chemical and bacteriological (biological) warfare. Thus, the First Committee would have before it substantial documentation on the subject covered by the proposed new item.

17. His delegation found it strange that the Soviet Government should have departed from its usual practice and should have submitted the item to the General Assembly instead of having presented its proposal to the Committee on Disarmament during the latter's recent deliberations on the subject. It had also been struck by the fact that the request for inclusion of the item spoke of the "complete elimination" of the weapons in question (A/7655, second paragraph), whereas the Secretary-General's report referred to their "earliest effective elimination" (A/7575, para. 377); he mentioned that point only to show that the problem had wide ramifications, one of which obviously was the question of effective control.

18. While he supported the inclusion of the item, he felt that it should be considered in conjunction with the continuing work on disarmament and in such a way as to make the best possible use of the First Committee's time. He accordingly supported the United Kingdom representative's proposal that it should be included as item 29 (c).

19. Mr. PIÑERA (Chile) indicated his delegation's support for the inclusion of the item. The Secretary-General's report had produced a heightened awareness among States, particularly the smaller States, of the catastrophic consequences of using modern weapons of chemical and bacteriological (biological) warfare. The item should clearly be dealt with as a question of the highest importance. His delegation agreed that it should be allocated to the First Committee. The question whether it should be considered by the First Committee separately or as a sub-item of item 29 was not of immediate importance to the General Committee and might be left for the First Committee to

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently circulated as document A/7741-DC/232.

decide. In the First Committee's discussions on the organization of its work, all Member States, including those not represented in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, would have an opportunity to state their views.

20. Mr. CHAYET (France) said that his delegation welcomed the proposed new item and would support its inclusion in the agenda and allocation to the First Committee. France, on whose initiative the 1925 Geneva Protocol had been concluded, held that the Protocol should be completed by a general prohibition of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons.

21. The General Committee had a responsibility for ensuring the proper conduct of the business of the General Assembly; that objective was not necessarily achieved by isolating related items, however important and urgent they might be. From the standpoint of the sound organization of work, he was inclined to favour the inclusion of the item as item 29 (c).

22. Mr. BORCH (Denmark) supported the inclusion of the item and its allocation to the First Committee. On the other hand, if the General Committee left the decision regarding the manner in which it should be taken up to the First Committee, the latter would lose a great deal of time going over the same ground again. Inclusion of the item as item 29 (c) did not mean that the question was any less important than if it were made a separate item. It would be dealt with just as seriously and with the same degree of urgency. His Government, which was not represented in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, thought it most important that the subject should be dealt with in the context of the negotiations of that Committee and of the work of the United Nations as reflected, for example, in the recent report of the Secretary-General. He hoped that the sponsors of the item could agree to its inclusion under item 29 and assured them that such action would not serve as a precedent for future groupings of items.

23. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan) said that since members agreed that the question was extremely important and should receive adequate consideration there should be no objection to treating it as a separate item.

24. His delegation considered the subject to be very serious indeed. While it had been discussed before, the actual use of chemical weapons today—against his country, for one—gave the matter particular urgency and made it more than simply an “old item”.

25. Time should be made available for an adequate and fruitful discussion of the item, and that could best be done if it was taken up separately. He therefore supported its inclusion as a separate item.

26. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the nine socialist States had requested that the item should be included for separate discussion as an important and urgent matter in view of the threat created by weapons of mass destruction. No previous speaker had denied the importance of the item, which was recognized by the overwhelming majority of Member States. The question of chemical and bacteriological weapons had become an

entirely new qualitative issue which should be separated from the question of disarmament in general. Its consideration as a separate item would emphasize the importance attaching to it and ensure its thorough discussion.

27. He agreed with the United Kingdom representative that the Assembly should discuss the Secretary-General's report (A/7575), which was a valuable document prepared by outstanding experts. That report, however, placed the question of chemical and bacteriological weapons on a slightly different plane. It was, in effect, an enlightening, scientific evaluation of the very dangerous consequences of the use of such weapons. As such, it would be valuable in the discussion of the separate item sponsored by the socialist States.

28. The draft convention attached to the request for inclusion of the item was a positive, international measure on which the Assembly was duty bound to take a separate decision, thereby drawing world attention to a major question which had become timely and urgent. To combine it with the reports of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and the Secretary-General would be to confuse discussion of it with other matters. He was alarmed by the attempts made by the United Kingdom and the United States representatives to create doubts concerning its validity as a separate item. The United States representative had said that his Government had a serious attitude to the problem; but it was precisely because the socialist States took an extremely serious view of the question that they had proposed its inclusion as a separate item. His delegation was prepared to study any proposal by the United States or any other delegation with a view to the preparation of an appropriate international instrument calling for the prohibition and destruction of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons.

29. The United States representative had drawn attention to the fact that the request for inclusion of the item referred to “the complete elimination” of chemical and bacteriological weapons whereas the Secretary-General's report used the words “earliest effective elimination”. In Russian, the words were synonymous. However, some delegations apparently wanted to leave room for manoeuvre by using certain terminology. In view of the doubt expressed by the United States representative, the Soviet delegation had some apprehension concerning the willingness of the United States delegation to consider the question fully and seriously. The nine socialist States sponsoring the item were in no doubt whatsoever that it should be discussed as a separate item.

30. Mr. SILVEIRA DA MOTA (Brazil) fully agreed that the item deserved substantive and detailed discussion during the Assembly's current session and favoured its inclusion on the First Committee's agenda. He believed that it should be considered in conjunction with the work being done by the Committee on Disarmament and the proposals submitted in that Committee by various States and therefore supported the United Kingdom proposal for its inclusion as item 29 (c) of the agenda.

31. Mr. OGBU (Nigeria) commended the sponsors of the request for the inclusion of the item and expressed satisfaction that the major Powers were agreed on its

inclusion in the Assembly's agenda. His delegation, as a member of the Committee on Disarmament, was extremely conscious of the need to give the item all due consideration. Since there was consensus on the inclusion and allocation of the item, the form in which it should appear on the First Committee's agenda became a matter of detail.

32. Mr. DASHTSEREN (Mongolia) said that his delegation, which had sponsored the request for the inclusion of the item, felt strongly that it should be examined separately. In that way it would receive the careful consideration it deserved, for its importance was unquestioned.

33. Mr. WARNER (United Kingdom) said that there was no cause for the alarm expressed by the representative of the Soviet Union, for his own delegation was no less convinced of the importance and urgency of the item than the Soviet delegation, as was shown by their initiative some time ago at Geneva. He had suggested that the item be linked with other items on disarmament so that it might be considered in the context of the work currently being carried out in Geneva. He suggested that the question of including the item as sub-item (c) of item 29 should be put to the vote.

34. Mr. BUFFUM (United States of America) assured the Soviet representative that the subject would be dealt with just as fully and effectively whether it was taken as a separate item or as a sub-item. He only wondered why the delegation of the Soviet Union had suddenly proposed the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the General Assembly when the Committee on Disarmament had already devoted one third of its time to the same question. While he would support the inclusion of the item, he felt that it would not be fair to the members of the Committee on Disarmament and the First Committee to isolate it from the work which they had already done. In supporting the suggestion of the United Kingdom representative, which seemed to him the only sensible procedure, he merely wished to ensure that the First Committee would not cover the same ground more often than was necessary.

*At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Csatorday (Hungary) took a place at the Committee table.*

35. Mr. CSATORDAY (Hungary) said that he had asked for the floor because his delegation, which had always played an important part in previous debates on the subject of chemical and bacteriological weapons, had sponsored the request for inclusion of the item. He did not understand why the General Committee had entered into a lengthy debate on a purely procedural matter. The item in question had already been under consideration for two years and its importance was more widely recognized every year. During the twenty-first session of the General Assembly the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom had said in the First Committee that the item was a propaganda issue and that they did not wish to discuss it, but more recently the Secretary-General had asked a group of experts to prepare a report on a related subject (see A/7575) and now the whole question had aroused great concern in the world at large. As the representative of the USSR had said, a new stage had been reached in the examination of the problem.

36. The draft convention contained in the request for the inclusion of the item dealt not with the limitation of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons but with the prohibition of the production and stockpiling of such weapons and the destruction of existing stocks. The new item could not, therefore, be compared with existing items on the agenda of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and deserved to be considered separately. The reluctance of certain delegations to give it such treatment reminded him of a statement by the United States Secretary of Defense to the effect that for the United States the production of chemical and bacteriological weapons was a matter of national security. The approach to the question was not exactly consonant with the intentions of those who had prepared the draft convention, nor did it correspond to the desire of the peoples of the world. The adoption of the draft convention could mark a most important step towards general disarmament, which was one of the main objectives of the United Nations, and it therefore fully supported the suggestion that the item should be dealt with as a separate item by the First Committee.

*Mr. Idzumbuir (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

37. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of Saudi Arabia, who was not a member of the General Committee, had requested permission to make a statement. In the absence of any objection, he would give him the floor.

*It was so decided.*

38. Mr. BARODY (Saudi Arabia) said that he had asked for the floor because he felt that the General Committee was wasting a great deal of time in discussing whether to include the item as a sub-item or separately, and that if it did not reach a decision very soon, more time would probably be wasted on the same discussion in the First Committee. In his view the item should be dealt with independently, because if it was included as sub-item (c) of item 29 there was no guarantee that sub-items (a) and (b) would not take up all the time allocated for consideration of the item. That must not be allowed to happen. It was the duty of all Member States to inform world public opinion about man's inhumanity to man in using weapons which, if they did not kill, maimed and injured so seriously as to cause lifelong suffering. He recalled that in the First World War, German and allied politicians had had the wisdom to reach a gentlemen's agreement banning the use of chlorine gas—and chlorine was very mild compared with modern chemical and bacteriological weapons. He had noted, moreover, that those members who wished to combine the item with existing items were not of the same political persuasion as those who had requested its inclusion as a separate item; in other words, the question was being turned into a political issue. He urged all members to cut short the discussion and allow the item to be dealt with independently as its importance warranted.

39. Mr. BORCH (Denmark) said that he wished to make it clear to the representative of Saudi Arabia that the motives of his own delegation for saying that the item should be included as a sub-item were entirely valid: to suggest that it be considered in conjunction with the Secretary-General's

recommendations and with the proposals of various delegations contained in the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament was not to treat it lightly, but to take it very seriously indeed.

40. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was surprised at the Danish representative's earlier statement (para. 22 above), which implied that if the new item was taken separately previous proposals might be neglected. On the contrary, there would be ample opportunity during the debate on the item for Members to remind the First Committee of previous proposals or to make new ones.

41. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said he believed members were generally agreed on the inclusion of the item and its allocation to the First Committee. He suggested that the General Committee should take a formal decision on those two points before deciding whether the item should be dealt with independently or as a sub-item.

42. The CHAIRMAN called for a decision on these two points and pointed out that the third point concerned an amendment submitted by the United Kingdom delegation to the proposal originally introduced by the representative of the USSR.

*The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item entitled "Conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and on the destruction of such weapons" should be included in the agenda and allocated to the First Committee.*

43. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) proposed that the General Committee should not take a decision on the third point but should refer it instead to the First Committee, as had been suggested by the representative of Chile.

44. Mr. PIÑERA (Chile) said that he had not made a formal proposal to that effect in his earlier statement, but he would do so now because it was apparent that in the view of many delegations the item was related to other items on the agenda of the First Committee. Moreover, as in previous years, the First Committee would decide how to arrange its items in the few days which it customarily devoted to the organization of its work at the beginning of the session.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that there were now three proposals before the Committee: first, the USSR delegation had requested that the General Committee should recommend the inclusion of the item as a separate item; secondly, the United Kingdom delegation had requested that the item should become a sub-item of item 29; and thirdly, the Chilean delegation had asked that the modalities for the discussion of the item be left to the First Committee.

*Miss Brooks (Liberia) resumed the Chair.*

46. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that, since adoption of the third proposal would make the other two superfluous, it should be voted on first in accordance with rule 131 of the rules of procedure.

47. Mr. EL-FARRA (Jordan) said that the General Committee had already commended the inclusion and allocation of the item as a separate item, and unless members decided otherwise it would remain separate. He agreed with the representative of Chile that any further decision on the matter should be left to the First Committee.

48. Mr. WARNER (United Kingdom) observed that a similar situation had arisen earlier over the question of Korea, and that the General Committee had succeeded in taking a decision. He did not see why the Chilean proposal should take precedence over his own, unless the representative of Chile regarded his proposal as an amendment to the United Kingdom proposal.

49. Mr. BUFFUM (United States of America) said that in his view there were two questions before the Committee. First, should the General Committee, as the steering committee of the General Assembly, help the First Committee in its work by recommending that the item introduced by the USSR delegation be considered separately or as a sub-item? He felt that much time would be wasted in the First Committee if the choice was not made in advance. It was, of course, within the competence of the First Committee to take a decision on the matter, but the General Committee would be abdicating its responsibility for ensuring the proper conduct of the business of the Assembly if, after considering all sides of the question, it failed to take a decision. Secondly, as the Chairman had said, the United Kingdom proposal was an amendment to the original proposal introduced by the USSR representative. In his view, therefore, the United Kingdom proposal should be put to the vote first.

50. Mr. KUŁAGA (Poland) thought that where opinion was divided in the General Committee, the final decision should be left to the full membership of the United Nations; he accordingly supported the Chilean proposal.

51. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Polish representative's statement accurately reflected the position of the socialist States. Furthermore, if the United Kingdom proposal was an amendment to the Soviet proposal, it followed that the Chilean proposal was an amendment to that of the United Kingdom and should be put to the vote first.

52. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) said that, under rule 43 of the rules of procedure, the statements of the Hungarian and Saudi Arabian representatives had been out of order.

53. Mr. CSATORDAY (Hungary) said that, as the sponsor of a request for the inclusion of an item before the Committee, he was entitled under rule 43 to participate in the discussion of that item.

54. The new item sponsored by the nine socialist States had been included in the Assembly's agenda and allocated to the First Committee. The General Committee had therefore fulfilled its task and it was for the First Committee to take any further decision.

55. Mr. PIÑERA (Chile) said that he had made a clear, logical and conciliatory proposal, supported by precedent, that the final decision should be left to the First Committee.

tee. Since his delegation was not a member of the Committee on Disarmament, it could not formulate a definite view at the present stage. The new item was clearly of an important and urgent character under rule 15 of the rules of procedure and, under rule 132, the Committee should vote on proposals relating to the same question in the order in which they had been submitted, unless it decided otherwise. Rule 131 was not relevant because it referred only to amendments.

56. Mr. IDZUMBUIR (Democratic Republic of the Congo), said that as the original Soviet proposal had been adopted, there were now no grounds for the Chilean proposal. Consequently, the only proposal with which the Committee was concerned was that of the United Kingdom.

57. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the Chilean proposal could be accepted without a formal vote. Consequently, his own delegation's proposal that the new item should be treated as a separate item should be put to the vote first because it had been submitted before that of the United Kingdom.

58. The CHAIRMAN suggested that a vote should be taken first on the Soviet proposal that the item should be discussed as a separate item; secondly, on the United Kingdom proposal that it should be dealt with as item 29 (c) and thirdly, that the First Committee should dispose of the item as it saw fit. If there was no objection, she would take it that the Committee agreed to put the proposals to the vote in that order.

*It was so agreed.*

*The Soviet proposal was rejected by 9 votes to 5, with 8 abstentions.*

*The United Kingdom proposal was adopted by 9 votes to 6, with 8 abstentions.*

59. The CHAIRMAN noted that, as the United Kingdom proposal had been adopted, there was no need to put the Chilean proposal to the vote.

60. Observing further that the Saudi Arabian representative had asked to exercise his right of reply, she said that if there was no objection, she would take it that the Committee agreed to hear him.

*It was so decided.*

61. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that his statement during the debate had not been out of order because he had asked to participate before the vote on the proposal of the Soviet Union had been taken.

62. He recalled that, as a result of prior agreement among the major Powers, there had been no question of combining the items on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons with other items and that pressure had been exerted on the smaller countries—which had no such weapons—to vote in favour of it. The same small countries were acutely conscious of the threat posed by chemical and bacteriological weapons. Indeed, the countries in Asia and the Middle East had been subjected to chemical warfare. As a result, they were anxious that the question should be discussed as a separate item and not combined with various other general questions of disarmament.

63. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) pointed out that the Hungarian delegation had sponsored the request for the inclusion of an additional item (A/7655). The Hungarian representative's statement had therefore been in order under rule 43. The Saudi Arabian delegation, however, was not among the sponsors of the item.

64. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) said that the General Committee, like any other organ of the General Assembly, was master of its own procedure. The rules of procedure were provisional and not inflexible; furthermore, no member of the Committee had objected to his speaking.

*The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.*