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Chairman: Mr. Leopoldo BENITES (Ecuador).

AGENDA ITEM 29

Question of convening a conference for the purpose of signing a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (continued) (A/6390-DC/228, A/C.1/L.384)

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS
(continued) (A/C.1/L.384)

1. Mr. Endalkachew MAKONNEN (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.384, said that a revision of the draft resolution was being prepared.^{1/} He therefore requested that the voting should be postponed until the next meeting.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 98

Elimination of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America (continued) (A/6399, A/C.1/L.369)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

2. Mr. AJAVON (Togo) said that the question of military bases should be considered in the context of the search for ways of easing the tension between East and West. The developing countries were vitally interested in the disarmament negotiations since upon their outcome would depend the tranquillity and security they needed for their economic and social development.

3. It was unfortunate that agenda item 98 was not more universal in scope. The Soviet draft resolution (A/C.1/L.369) was somewhat discriminatory in that it applied only to the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, with the implication that they were still minors. Furthermore, the draft resolution should take into account the sovereign rights of States, including their right to conclude mutual assistance agreements with a friendly Power even if, in certain cases, the agreements might provide for the installation of military bases on the national territory of one or both of the sovereign States concerned.

4. He hoped therefore that the USSR representative would agree to amend the draft resolution so that the title would read: "Elimination of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa, America and Europe". Similarly, in the first preambular paragraph, the words "Asia, Africa and Latin America" should be replaced by the words "Asia, Africa, America and Europe". Operative paragraph 1, which should also take into account the sovereign rights of States, should be amended to read: "Invites States with military bases in the territory of independent States in Asia, Africa, America and Europe immediately to eliminate these bases and never to establish others". It was understood that the dependent territories in Asia, Africa and Latin America would continue to be administered in accordance with the laws of the countries on which they were still temporarily dependent, and the question of the establishment of military bases should be taken up immediately before or even after they became independent.

5. His delegation would support the draft resolution if it was amended in that way. Otherwise, he would abstain when it was put to the vote.

6. Lord CHALFONT (United Kingdom) said that despite the Soviet representative's protestation that the Soviet Union favoured the elimination of military bases everywhere, including Europe, the Soviet draft resolution deliberately excluded Europe, where the Soviet Union had massive bodies of troops stationed on the territories of its allies. The propagandist and discriminatory character of the Soviet draft resolution was apparent from the fact that it applied only to territories where the Soviet Union had no military bases. It was worth pointing out that throughout the disarmament negotiations the Western Powers had not made unprovoked attacks upon the policies of the Soviet Union or its allies. Nor had they ever put forward, in the guise of disarmament proposals, measures designed primarily to ensure a military disadvantage for the Soviet Union.

7. The Soviet representative had used the term "base" to cover even such normal and innocent

^{1/} Subsequently circulated as document A/C.1/L.384/Rev.1.

facilities as radar stations and to evoke emotional reactions associated with such terms as colonialism, suppression of populations, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Portuguese policies in Africa. The statement that Southern Rhodesia was an enormous base of colonialism was really quite meaningless and the insinuation that the United Kingdom was responsible for Portuguese policies in Africa was obviously false. As on previous occasions in the Eighteen-Nation Committee, the Soviet representative had again made quite unfounded allegations about the United Kingdom Government's intentions regarding the British base at Aden. The United Kingdom Government intended to honour its pledge to withdraw its military base from Aden in 1968 and had no intention of transferring the base to Bahrain.

8. The question of the existence of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America should be viewed in the context of collective defence. Apart from the confrontation between the two major blocs, there were regional tensions and disputes between neighbouring countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as in Europe. The right of collective defence was implicit in the United Nations Charter, and any country had the right to enter freely into agreements with other countries to defend their national security. It was wrong to suggest that those tensions and disputes were caused by the presence of foreign bases. Everyone knew of cases in recent history where the aggressive policies of one country had threatened the integrity of a smaller and militarily weaker neighbour and that neighbour's integrity had been preserved with the help of allied forces. It would be unwise therefore to condemn out of hand all foreign bases, even those that had been the subject of freely negotiated agreements, as simply vestiges of the colonialist era and as morally reprehensible. That point of view had already been expressed during the debates in the Disarmament Commission in 1965 by the representatives of the Philippines,^{2/} Nigeria,^{3/} Cameroon,^{4/} Lebanon^{5/} and Malaysia,^{6/} among others.

9. He appealed to the Soviet delegation to withdraw its draft resolution, which was aimed at disrupting the Committee's work. If the draft resolution was not withdrawn, he would certainly vote against it and he urged others to do so in the name of every State's sovereign right to enter freely into collective defence arrangements to preserve its integrity and ensure its survival.

Mr. Fahmy (United Arab Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

10. Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that the question of the elimination of foreign military bases was inseparably linked with the whole problem of general and complete disarmament. Military bases maintained by imperialist Powers on the territories of other States were a

source of international tension in various parts of the world. They were used for direct aggression, for suppressing national liberation movements and for protecting the political and economic interests of Western monopolies in colonial territories and newly independent countries.

11. The Soviet proposal for the elimination of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America was a logical continuation of the socialist countries' efforts to guarantee the peace and security of peoples and to curb the arms race. If the United Kingdom and other delegations holding the same views had displayed the necessary goodwill, the proposal could have been extended to cover foreign military bases in Europe and all other parts of the world. As it was, the delegations of the Western Powers were opposed to even a partial solution of the problem of foreign military bases. The socialist countries attached the highest importance to the problem, not because they were pursuing any narrow interests of their own, but because they believed that the elimination of foreign military bases in Asia, Africa and Latin America would be in the interests of all peoples on the three continents, and in accordance with their wishes. The idea of eliminating foreign military bases had been expressed in May 1963 by the Summit Conference of Independent African States; and the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, had declared its full support to the countries which were seeking to secure the evacuation of foreign bases on their territory and had called upon all States maintaining troops and bases in other countries to remove them forthwith.

12. The Western Powers often tried to justify the presence of their troops on the territories of other countries by referring to the need for increasing their defensive capability. In fact, their military bases were designed for offensive rather than defensive purposes. The United States had used military bases in South Korea, Japan and other countries in its aggressive war against the Korean people. The United Kingdom had used its military bases in the Mediterranean as a springboard for aggression against the Egyptian people in the autumn of 1956. Belgian bases in the Congo, and NATO bases as well, had been used for aggression against the Congolese people. United States military bases in the Caribbean, including the Guantánamo base on Cuban territory, had been converted into strongholds for aggression and provocation against Cuba and for interventionist activities in Central America. United Kingdom troops were protecting the interests of United Kingdom monopoly capital in southern Arabia and other regions of the Near East. A pamphlet issued in March 1966 by the British Institute of Strategic Studies had stated that the primary purpose of British bases and commitments in southern Arabia and the Persian Gulf was to safeguard the flow of Middle East oil and to provide a base for British military intervention in other areas close at hand.^{7/} A commentator in *U.S. News and World Report* of 7 March 1966 had written that United Kingdom outposts on islands in

^{2/} See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission*, 84th meeting, para. 11.

^{3/} *Ibid.*, 94th meeting, para. 24.

^{4/} *Ibid.*, 96th meeting, para. 40.

^{5/} *Ibid.*, 99th meeting, para. 7.

^{6/} *Ibid.*, para. 21.

^{7/} See *Sources of Conflict in the Middle East*, Adelphi Papers, No. 26, March 1966 (The Institute for Strategic Studies, London), p. 28.

the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean would be used mainly as centres of Anglo-American air power.

13. The United States alone had more than 2,200 bases and other military installations on the territory of foreign countries. According to U.S. News and World Report of 3 January 1966, 835,000 United States troops were stationed in thirty-one countries abroad. More than a third of all the aircraft of the United States Air Force and nearly all the warships of the United States Navy were deployed outside the United States itself. In South-East Asia, United States military bases were involved in the escalation of the war in Viet-Nam and were being used for aggressive activities against Laos and Cambodia. There were plans to use them as springboards for further aggression against socialist countries and national liberation movements. They were already employed for exerting political pressure on national governments. Countries on whose territories they were situated had already been drawn into the United States aggressive bloc. With its bases in Thailand and South Viet-Nam, the United States was continually exerting pressure on neutral Cambodia. The United States military airfields and naval installations on Taiwan, which were used as bases for strategic B-52 bombers and Polaris-equipped submarines, represented a threat to the security of the whole Pacific region. The United Kingdom representative had quoted the Philippine representative in the Disarmament Commission, who had stated that the presence of foreign military bases was in principle undesirable, but sometimes necessary. But the Committee knew only too well which State had attacked and occupied the Philippines.

14. The United States had also established a large number of bases in Latin America. The Panama Canal Zone had become a major United States military base. On the territory of Puerto Rico there were more than twenty large United States military installations, some of which had been used for armed intervention against the Dominican Republic. There were also some new United States military bases in West Africa, Mozambique and the Spanish colonies. Press reports of the United States Army's intention to transfer its bases from France to North Africa had given rise to understandable concern among the peoples of Africa. All the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America should learn a lesson from events in South-East Asia. Military bases established by the Western Powers under so-called "mutual defence" arrangements could easily be converted into bases for openly aggressive wars, as in Viet-Nam.

15. The United States and the United Kingdom representatives had both argued that the establishment of military bases on foreign territory was in keeping with the Charter provisions on collective security and self-defence. But it was useless for countries to try to conceal their aggressive designs by distorting and abusing the principles of the Charter. The existence of foreign military bases on the territory of other countries was, in fact, contrary to the spirit and the purposes of the Charter, and to the provisions of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection

of their Independence and Sovereignty. In spite of the United Kingdom representative's interpretation of colonial problems, the Committee would be aware that the presence of foreign military bases in territories where racist and colonialist policies were pursued merely increased the difficulties of the indigenous peoples.

16. Equally untenable were the allegations by representatives of Western countries that their Governments were maintaining bases on the territories of other States with the approval of the States concerned. Most foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America had been established during the period of colonial domination, when the colonialists had never sought the agreement or approval of local populations. Other bases had been imposed on newly independent States which had been obliged, in the early days of their independence, to accept compromise arrangements. The declarations by the African States and by the non-aligned countries to which he had already referred (para. 11 above) showed, in fact, that many countries favoured the elimination of foreign military bases. Cuba had long been demanding the elimination of the base at Guantánamo, and the Byelorussian people wholeheartedly supported that demand. The Panamanian people had called upon the United States to withdraw its troops from the Panama Canal Zone. As long ago as December 1964, the President of Cyprus had demanded the elimination of United Kingdom military bases on Cypriot territory. On 23 April 1963, at the 266th meeting of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, the Honduran representative had demanded the return to Honduras of the Swan Islands, which the United States had occupied as an air base during the Second World War. Even the United States magazine Time had stated, on 23 September 1966, that many Asian leaders were looking forward to the withdrawal of United States forces.

17. Some countries did believe that their national security could be guaranteed by the presence of foreign military bases on their territories. But that was a mistaken belief. It was clear from the example of United States aggression in Viet-Nam that countries with foreign military bases on their territories could easily become the victims of a military conflict unleashed by the State maintaining the bases.

18. Many countries which had been forced to accept agreements permitting the establishment of bases on their territories were now asking for assistance in liberating themselves from the agreements. The United Nations had a duty to provide them with the assistance they required, and it could do so by adopting the Soviet draft resolution, by which the General Assembly would invite States with military bases in Asia, Africa and Latin America to eliminate them immediately, and request the Secretary-General to supervise that process and report on its results to the General Assembly at its twenty-second session.

19. He hoped that the draft resolution would be supported by the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and approved by a majority of delegations. If it was adopted one of the most serious causes of international tension would be eliminated; the independence of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin

America would be strengthened; and the peoples of the world would move a stage nearer to final victory in their historic struggle for the elimination of colonialism and its consequences and for general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Benites (Ecuador) resumed the Chair.

20. Mr. AZNAR (Spain), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Soviet and Byelorussian representatives' assertions about United States plans to establish a military base in Spanish West Africa were based on misinformation. No such plans existed. Although he had supposed that the debate on foreign military bases was aimed at achieving at least some modest progress towards disarmament, he was now beginning to suspect that propaganda might be considered more important than disarmament or truth.

21. Whenever foreign military bases were discussed in the United Nations, the Soviet delegation confined its interest to Africa, Asia and America, apparently regarding Europe as an area exempt from such discussion. The military bases which constituted an urgent problem were those that had been created and maintained by force and violence. There was not the slightest trace of any foreign military base in preparation in Spanish West Africa. On the other hand, the base at Gibraltar constituted a typical example of a military base created and maintained against the will of a people.

22. Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the question of foreign military bases was an urgent and timely one which had been discussed both in the General Assembly and in other international organs and it had been entirely proper for his delegation to raise the question in the First Committee. It was no secret that the existence of foreign military bases in many parts of the world was a most serious source of tension and constituted intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. Many such bases had of course been established during the Second World War; however, despite the fact that more than twenty years had passed since the end of that war, they were still in existence.

23. A number of representatives, including those of the United States and Spain, had asked why the Soviet Union did not propose the elimination of bases in Europe or the withdrawal of troops from other European countries. The answer—which had already been given by the representative of the Soviet Union at the 1463rd meeting—was that the Soviet Union had introduced in the Eighteen-Nation Committee a proposal for the withdrawal of troops from all foreign territories. It still maintained that proposal, which had, however, been strongly opposed by the Western Powers, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States. They had argued that the Soviet Union wished to alter the strategic balance of Europe and the world and that, after a withdrawal of military forces from Europe, the Soviet Union could easily and quickly return its troops to their present European stations in the event of a crisis, while the Western Powers, whose home bases were some 6,000 kilometres from the main dividing line between the Warsaw Treaty countries and the NATO countries, would need a long time to return their troops to their

present stations. It was the rejection of that proposal that had prompted the Soviet Union to offer a partial solution which would eliminate bases in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Yet the Western Powers were now opposing even that partial solution.

24. The Soviet Union's statement on the question of bases had been an attempt to deal seriously with a serious problem and should not be dismissed with the charge of "propaganda" often made by the United Kingdom and the United States in connexion with any question that affected their interests. The First Committee had adopted resolutions on a number of items in spite of such charges, most recently on the question of prohibiting chemical and bacteriological weapons.

25. Without discussing the Spanish representative's remarks in detail, he wished to recall the recent incident near the village of Palomares, which had given rise to great apprehension, and which hardly bore out the statement that there were no bases on Spanish territory.

26. Mr. SHU (China) said that his delegation had no intention of participating in the debate on the present item, which the Soviet Union had obviously placed on the agenda only for propaganda purposes. He felt compelled, however, to refute the Byelorussian representative's groundless allegations about the Republic of China.

27. First, there were no foreign military bases in his country. Like many other countries, the Republic of China maintained national military bases for the purpose of defence, particularly defence against communist aggression. Secondly, the treaty of mutual defence between China and the United States, registered with the United Nations Secretariat in accordance with Article 102 of the United Nations Charter, was defensive in purpose and in full accord with the provisions of the Charter.

28. Any country had the inherent right to take individual or collective measures of defence and to have national or international military bases. It was intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign State for the representative of another country to say that a military base established in that State's territory with the approval of its Government should not have been established or should now be eliminated. Such intervention violated one of the fundamental principles of the Charter.

29. Mr. AZNAR (Spain) said that the Soviet representative had failed to comment on the Spanish delegation's refutation of the allegations about military bases in Spanish West Africa, but had instead expressed concern at the Palomares incident. He assured the Soviet representative that the concern of the Spanish Government and people was far greater and that the lesson of Palomares would not go unheeded.

30. His Government, like that of the Soviet Union, wanted all foreign military bases to be eliminated. However, instead of beginning with the elimination of bases in Asia, Africa and Latin America, it proposed that a beginning should be made with those bases which had been imposed, maintained and utilized by force and against the will of the local population.

31. Lord CHALFONT (United Kingdom) said that the question of Gibraltar was on the agenda of two other United Nations organs and he would not attempt to deal with it at present. He wished, however, to point out two inaccuracies in the Spanish representative's statement. First, the United Kingdom base at Gibraltar was not being maintained there by violence or force of any kind; secondly, its presence, far from being contrary to the wishes of the local people, was welcomed by all of them.

32. He would not enter into a debate at present with the Soviet representative about proposals for disarmament measures in Europe, but would be prepared to discuss his Government's views on the matter in detail at a more appropriate time. In regard to the Soviet representative's remarks about propaganda, the United Kingdom delegation did not label as

propaganda the substance of any subject or resolution brought before the Committee, although it did often regard the manner in which it was introduced as propaganda.

33. Mr. AZNAR (Spain) agreed with the United Kingdom representative that the problem of Gibraltar would be discussed in detail in another organ of the United Nations. His statement had contained no inaccuracies, and the United Kingdom representative was well aware of the reasons for the situation of constant tension and violence at Gibraltar. For example, the isthmus joining Gibraltar to the rest of the territory of Spain had been occupied without justification in any treaty, an airfield had been established there, and military aircraft operating from it were constantly violating Spanish air space.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.