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**FIRST COMMITTEE, 1375th
MEETING**

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Chairman: Mr. Károly CSATORDAY (Hungary).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Benites (Ecuador), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 95

Question of convening a world disarmament conference (continued) (A/5992, A/C.1/L.340 and Add.1)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. FEDORENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the trend in world events, the ever-increasing pace of the armaments race and the aggravation of international tension had made the convening of a world disarmament conference a matter of vital importance. The USSR delegation had proposed at an earlier stage that a world disarmament conference should be convened in mid-1966 at Geneva or any other acceptable place; and it now wished to repeat its proposal, for such a conference would help to break the present deadlock in disarmament negotiations.

2. The idea of holding a world disarmament conference had been gaining ground for some years. The participants in the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cairo in October 1964, had, in their Declaration, expressed their conviction that the convening of a world disarmament conference, to which all countries would be invited, would provide powerful support to the efforts being made to set in motion the process of disarmament and for securing the further steady development of that process. Their statement had been welcomed by the Disarmament Commission, which, in its resolution of 11 June 1965,^{1/} had recommended that the General Assembly should give urgent consideration to the proposal at its twentieth session. In the Assembly's general debate at the current session the proposal had been supported by many of the non-aligned States and by countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, in addition to the socialist countries; and it was significant that the draft resolution on the convening of a world disarmament conference (A/C.1/L.340 and Add.1) had been sponsored by thirty-nine countries.

^{1/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965, document DC/224.

3. Since the proposal was now on the point of being adopted, it was essential that the Committee should do everything in its power to ensure the conference's success. In the first place, States which were not yet members of the United Nations, or had been excluded from the negotiations on disarmament, should be invited to attend it. It was essential to face the realities of the international situation; effective and agreed disarmament measures could not be devised without the participation of representatives from all the major world Powers—including the People's Republic of China and France, which were not represented at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. In the Assembly's general debate at the current session most delegations had stressed that it was particularly important that the People's Republic of China should take part in disarmament negotiations, and that it might be drawn into the negotiations through a world disarmament conference.

4. Secondly, the world disarmament conference must at all costs avoid the errors and omissions of earlier disarmament conferences. The Eighteen-Nation Committee had failed to achieve any progress at its last session, and had been legitimately criticized for its failure by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and by the non-aligned States, which had made, and were still making, such great efforts to ensure the success of disarmament negotiations. It would be a mistake to pass on mechanically to the world disarmament conference procedures which had been worked out at earlier meetings. Those who wished to impose conditions for convening the conference were in fact limiting the scope of its discussions from the outset; and that could not be tolerated, since the whole purpose of the conference was to look for new and bold approaches to a solution of the disarmament problem. All participants in the world conference should be completely free to submit proposals and express their ideas; there was no justification whatsoever for trying to channel the work of the conference along the well-trodden paths of earlier negotiations.

5. Thirdly, the world conference should not be organized under United Nations auspices. If it were, States which were not members of the Organization might be prevented from accepting invitations.

6. At the Committee's 1374th meeting, one representative had made an observation which could only be interpreted as an effort to frustrate the attempts being made to convene a world disarmament conference; and in explaining his understanding of the term "countries and States" the same representative had shown a lack of elementary knowledge. The Soviet delegation wished to remind him that no parts of Germany were occupied by the Soviet Union. There were at present two German

States—the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. The German Democratic Republic was a sovereign member of the socialist community and a genuinely democratic country which was determined to maintain peace and international security, which advocated disarmament and which had submitted a number of specific disarmament proposals—including the proposal that both German States should renounce the use of nuclear weapons.

7. The convening of a world disarmament conference was a highly responsible task. The organizational measures it necessitated should therefore be entrusted to a preparatory committee, as suggested in the draft resolution.

8. He was sure that the General Assembly would make specific recommendations for convening the conference in accordance with the proposal endorsed by a very large number of countries. The Soviet delegation felt strongly that the conference should be held not later than mid-1966.

9. Mr. HSUEH (China) said that his Government fully and enthusiastically supported all measures consistent with the principles and purposes of the United Nations that would help to bring about disarmament, for the sake of international peace and security. That basic policy had guided his delegation in the specific positions it had adopted on all questions relating to disarmament in the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the General Assembly and the Security Council, and it was in pursuance of that policy that his Government had acceded to the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water of 1963.

10. On the question of convening a world disarmament conference, again, his delegation believed that the test of such a measure was whether it would or would not help the work of disarmament in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations. His delegation recognized the urgent need for progress towards disarmament, but it firmly believed that the forum in which the question was at present being dealt with was the proper one. The General Assembly, assisted by the Eighteen-Nation Committee, had been carrying out its responsibility under Article 11 of the United Nations Charter. If progress in disarmament negotiations had been less rapid than might have been expected, the fault lay with the international political climate and not with the forum in which the question had been discussed.

11. What the recommendation of the Disarmament Commission sought was a change of forum; it sought to take the work of disarmament out of the General Assembly and place it before a world disarmament conference, in the hope of thereby giving the work new impetus and a new direction. It was important, therefore, to analyse the differences between the General Assembly and a world disarmament conference.

12. First, since such a conference would be independent of the United Nations, it could, in theory, choose not to adhere to the principles of the United Nations. But it was difficult to conceive of a nobler set of principles than those enshrined in the Charter, and equally difficult to imagine how a new set of prin-

ciples would promote and hasten the work of disarmament. Since all Members of the United Nations were committed to the principles of the Charter, they would surely not wish a disarmament conference to follow a set of principles not consistent with them.

13. Secondly, a world disarmament conference might have different rules of procedure. However, it seemed hardly likely that a change in the manner of conducting business would produce any more rapid advance towards disarmament.

14. The main difference between the General Assembly and the proposed world disarmament conference, lastly, appeared to lie in their composition; the recommendation of the Disarmament Commission laid great stress on the participation of "all countries" in the conference. He did not know what countries other than the Members of the United Nations would be invited to attend, and would attend, the proposed conference, or how they might be expected to help in promoting disarmament. A number of representatives, however, had stated in the Disarmament Commission and in the First Committee that progress in disarmament was hardly possible without the participation of the Chinese Communists; to those representatives, the real purpose of convening a world disarmament conference was apparently to enable the Chinese Communists to participate in disarmament talks. The questions that must be examined were how Chinese communist participation could be expected to contribute to progress on disarmament and whether it could bring to the conference an influence that was beneficial to peace.

15. He had given some answers to those questions in the Disarmament Commission earlier in 1965. Since that time the Chinese Communists had given their own answers, by word and deed, in clearer and more emphatic terms.

16. As to the Chinese Communists' fundamental policy on war and peace, Lin Piao, the so-called Defence Minister, had in his notorious statement of 3 September 1965 quoted Mao Tse-tung as saying that political power grew out of the barrel of a gun and that the highest form of revolution was the seizure of power by armed forces and the settlement of the issues by war; that principle, according to Mao, held good universally, for China and for all other countries. Lin Piao had gone on to glorify war as a "great school" and a means for pushing history forward, and had said that "in diametrical opposition to the Khrushchev revisionists, the Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary people never take a gloomy view of war". It was strange indeed that those dissatisfied with progress on disarmament should turn for inspiration to a régime which had expressed such views.

17. On the specific question of disarmament, the Chinese Communists were not content with their refusal to adhere to, and their condemnation of, the partial test ban treaty of 1963: on 29 September 1965, Chen Yi, the Communist Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, had publicly urged that more countries should acquire nuclear weapons.

18. Some representatives perhaps felt that exposure to the influence of world public opinion at a world disarmament conference would change the views of

the Chinese Communists. But the statements he had quoted were not mere passing remarks; they reflected the deep-rooted convictions of the Chinese communist chieftains, first expressed decades ago and now reaffirmed and extended to cover all countries. Such convictions could not be changed by the passage of time or by public opinion.

19. Any illusions that it would be possible to influence the Chinese Communists by inviting them to the conference should be dispelled by the lesson of the second Asian-African conference, which had been scheduled to begin at Algiers on 5 November 1965. The Chinese Communists had posed a number of conditions for their participation, chief among them being the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the conference, the revocation of what they called the illegal invitation extended to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the use of the conference solely for condemnation of the United States. The majority of the other participants had found those conditions unacceptable; thus, instead of attending the Conference and exposing themselves to influence, the Chinese Communists had sabotaged and wrecked it. It was obvious that in participating in an international conference the Chinese Communists sought either to dominate it or to destroy it; it would be a disaster for a world disarmament conference to meet either fate.

20. Perhaps the proposed change of forum from the General Assembly to a world disarmament conference was designed to meet the Chinese Communists' hostility to the United Nations. But even if such a conference could dissociate itself from the United Nations, should it dissociate itself from the policy of Soviet-United States co-operation to promote disarmament and prevent war—which the Chinese Communists interpreted as a conspiracy between the Soviet Union and the United States to use the United Nations as a tool for their domination of the world?

21. The sponsors of the Disarmament Commission resolution had wished to let the non-aligned nations take the initiative for a world disarmament conference. But any hope that the Chinese Communists loved the non-aligned nations was illusory; they had accused the non-aligned nations of "working as a Trojan horse for United States imperialism" and "undermining the struggle of the peoples for national independence".

22. It was thus clear from the words and deeds of the Chinese Communists that the influence they would bring to a world disarmament conference would not be a beneficial one, but an evil influence of war and violence; they would raise an impassable barrier to disarmament. If the proposal to convene a world disarmament conference was designed to give the Chinese Communists a place at the conference table, it would do enormous harm to the work of disarmament; an error of such magnitude would have disastrous and irremediable consequences.

23. In keeping with his Government's basic policy, therefore, his delegation considered the recommendation of the Disarmament Commission unacceptable.

24. Mr. AMIOUNI (Lebanon) observed that some speakers, while recognizing the importance of general

and complete disarmament, had expressed doubts as to the chances of success of a world disarmament conference, or had stressed the difficulties raised by the convening of such a conference. In his delegation's view, the fears expressed were, to say the least, premature; and they might well endanger the success of the Assembly's efforts. Some of them, indeed, were without foundation.

25. The incalculable benefits which general disarmament would bring and the contribution it would make to the prosperity and tranquillity of the peoples of the world justified the exertion of all possible effort to solve the problem, which should be approached in a spirit of co-operation and compromise. His delegation had no illusions about the obstacles which barred the way to the goal of disarmament, but it believed that they could be surmounted. Every constructive proposal that could help to ensure the convening of a world disarmament conference should be considered by the Committee. Lebanon strongly supported the draft resolution before the Committee, and urged all other Member States to give it their support, in the interest of all mankind.

26. Mr. MOD (Hungary) said that in view of the present state of negotiations on disarmament, the question of convening a world disarmament conference was one of the most important items on the agenda of the current session. Though the United Nations Charter described the maintenance of international peace and security as one of the main objectives of the United Nations, and disarmament was essential for the maintenance of peace, the first few years of the Organization's existence had not been marked by any appreciable progress towards disarmament; but the position had changed as soon as the United States had realized that it no longer enjoyed a monopoly of atomic weapons and had drawn the inevitable conclusions. From that time on there had been a series of negotiations under United Nations auspices, negotiations which had been able to proceed on a new basis once the two parties could conduct their dialogue on a footing of equality. But despite that change, several years of constant effort by the socialist countries and increasing pressure by the non-aligned countries had been required to create an atmosphere in which the idea of general and complete disarmament had become part of the language of the United Nations and the basic principles of disarmament had been unanimously approved by the General Assembly. It was thanks to the combined efforts of the Soviet Union and the non-aligned countries, also, that the tripartite composition of the Eighteen-Nation Committee had been accepted. Meanwhile, the partial test ban treaty had been negotiated and signed outside the United Nations, though it had unfortunately not been followed up by equally important collateral measures; the non-aligned countries had become one of the most important elements in international politics; and France and the People's Republic of China had acquired their own nuclear weapons. In spite of that, disarmament negotiations had continued in the Eighteen-Nation Committee without the participation of France, and in the United Nations without the People's Republic of China.

27. Thus, the main obstacle to a successful solution of the disarmament problem was the fact that, in a changed world and a new international atmosphere in which the balance of power had changed as well, the United Nations was still discussing obsolete and stereotyped methods of achieving disarmament. The time had come when all who were genuinely interested in general and complete disarmament should realize that no serious results could be achieved without the participation of the two great Powers to which he had referred earlier, and should make a concerted effort to ensure that some definite action was taken. It was equally clear that responsibility for the present situation of disarmament negotiations under United Nations auspices lay solely with the United States. Many past and present leaders of the United States had in fact themselves admitted that without the participation of the People's Republic of China it was impossible to discuss general and complete disarmament or the prohibition of nuclear weapons with any reasonable hope of success.

28. Disarmament negotiations could not be successful unless, in the first place, they proceeded from a basis acceptable to all the five great Powers; but no such basis at present existed within the United Nations, nor, owing to the attitude of the United States, was one in prospect. Under the fundamental provisions of the Charter, the five great Powers had assumed special responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and international security; and the importance of those provisions had become even greater now that the five great Powers all possessed nuclear weapons. It was therefore truer at the present time than ever before that co-operation between all the five great Powers was necessary for the solution of any important problem, and particularly the problem of general and complete disarmament. The proposal to convene a world disarmament conference might be regarded as a new attempt to bring the five great Powers closer together; for by opposing the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations and by its aggression in South-East Asia and elsewhere, the United States had made co-operation impossible inside the United Nations, and difficult outside it.

29. The second point to be borne in mind was that general and complete disarmament must be recognized as in the common interests of all mankind, and that it was unthinkable unless all countries, throughout the world, agreed to put it into effect. But that required the co-operation of all Governments and peoples; and such co-operation was at present possible only outside the United Nations.

30. The third point to remember was the extreme complexity of disarmament problems, which could be approached by different methods and from different angles. Their solution, however, could be facilitated if certain matters of detail were settled in advance.

31. The Eighteen-Nation Committee offered possibilities for progress, of which the fullest advantage should be taken. Those possibilities were limited, however, because the Committee, like the United Nations itself, was an incomplete forum. The policy of the Western Powers in the Eighteen-Nation Committee was aimed not at general and complete dis-

armament but at the control or possible reduction of armaments, preferably to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union.

32. The proposal made by France for a meeting of the five great Powers was also a step forward, the significance and possibilities of which went beyond the actual problems of disarmament. Consideration should also be given to the appeal made just after the first Chinese atomic explosion by the Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of China for a conference of Heads of Governments to discuss the destruction and complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. That appeal was especially important and encouraging because it had come from the great Power which had so far been prevented by the machinations of the United States from participating in the activities of the United Nations.

33. Last but not least, there were the proposals for the convening of a world disarmament conference. The Hungarian delegation supported the non-aligned countries' initiative, which should open a new chapter in the history of disarmament negotiations. Effective progress could be made only within a framework of true universality, which did not yet exist in the United Nations.

34. His delegation believed that the convening of a world disarmament conference was necessary, timely and urgent. After suffering vast human and material losses in the two world wars, Hungary had made great achievements through peaceful development and the construction of a new socialist society. It wanted to defend those achievements and safeguard its present and its future. Europe had been the starting-point of two world wars; the political and military aspirations of leading circles in West Germany, with the compliance and assistance of certain Western Powers, were posing a new threat to the whole world. Only general and complete disarmament could ensure that in future international disputes were settled by peaceful means and could remove the danger of a war that might exterminate the human race.

35. While it realized the objective difficulties posed by the organization of a world disarmament conference, Hungary thought that the conference should be held as soon as possible and with the participation of all countries. Otherwise, it would not be a world conference or an effective one.

36. Mr. CAVALLETTI (Italy) said that the Hungarian representative had held the Western Powers responsible for the delays and difficulties of the disarmament negotiations. He seemed to have forgotten that in June 1960 negotiations at Geneva in the Ten-Nation Committee had been interrupted by the withdrawal of the five delegations of socialist countries from the proceedings; almost three years of effort and good will on the part of the Western Powers had then been needed before they could be resumed. Appreciable results had been achieved, particularly the conclusion — on the basis of an idea first advanced by Italy and a draft treaty presented by the United Kingdom and the United States — of the Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water.

37. The Italian delegation was in principle in favour of a world disarmament conference. The conference should not, however, be convened unless there were reasonable prospects of success and universal attendance, or if there was any likelihood of a negative outcome.

38. In considering the advisability of a world conference it was important not to lose sight of the role of the United Nations in disarmament matters. Disarmament was and always would be one of the essential tasks of the Organization, which had already done important work in that field, particularly by establishing principles for any guaranteed disarmament process. The Geneva negotiations had made progress and had paved the way for further developments; the First Committee itself had recently adopted a resolution recommending the resumption of the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. The negotiations should be continued and conclusions should be reached within the existing framework, which offered definite opportunities for reducing armaments, increasing general confidence and preparing the way for general and complete disarmament.

39. The Geneva negotiations would be more comprehensive and more effective if France participated in the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee. With its sincere desire for peace, France would make a valuable contribution, particularly in the forthcoming work on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

40. The objectives and principles of disarmament elaborated in the United Nations could not be imposed on non-member States as a prior condition for participation in a world disarmament conference. On the other hand, the important work of the United Nations should not be disavowed, and the Members of the

Organization should strive for universal acceptance of those objectives and principles as a basis for the work of the world conference.

41. He agreed that a preparatory committee would be needed to make arrangements for the conference, but the draft resolution that had been submitted did not specify how the committee would be constituted. His delegation considered that the great experience of the countries participating in the current negotiations should be used in the political and technical preparation of the world conference. In addition, the composition of the preparatory committee should be such as to permit the collaboration of countries of special military importance which were outside the United Nations. The United Nations should maintain an interest in the work of the preparatory committee; and mention should perhaps be made in the draft resolution of the right of the General Assembly to review at its next session the implementation of its resolution on a world disarmament conference.

42. Good will was not enough to ensure the convening and success of a world disarmament conference; it must be accompanied by positive intentions on the part of all participants, who should display a spirit of co-operation and a sincere desire for peace. Indeed, the conference could serve as a gauge of the desire for universal peace felt by all countries including Communist China. The presence and participation of Communist China would facilitate that country's wider participation in international co-operation. The Peking Government should show peace-loving countries that it was prepared to pursue a policy of international co-operation and understanding.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.