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CONTENTS

Chairman: Mr. Omar Abdel Hamid ADEEL (Sudan).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Enckell (Finland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 90

Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (A/5197, A/5200, DC/203, A/C.1/867, A/C.1/871, A/C.1/875, A/C.1/L.312) (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. MALALASEKERA (Ceylon) said that the Cuban crisis offered some fruitful lessons with respect to the question of disarmament. First, it had been made clear that nuclear war could not be ruled out as impossible, for it had almost happened. Secondly, the concept of the deterrent had become bankrupt; for while each side believed that it could deter the other from attacking by demonstrating a destructive power equal to that of its adversary, neither side could be sure that it could deter itself from attacking, in other words, from yielding to the pressures goading it to start a war. Fortunately, the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union had been wise enough to resort to the United Nations to resolve a dilemma which had got out of hand. But there might well have been a catastrophe if the negative pressures had been greater. The Cuban crisis had thus shown that the only true deterrent was the complete absence of weapons.

2. His delegation noted with regret that no real gains had been made at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva, and in particular that the questions of inspection and balance had not yet been solved. There were no encouraging signs that another year of discussion could break the present deadlock. Moreover, the world situation—in particular, the Cuban crisis and the unhappy developments on the border between India and the People's Republic of China—was certainly not favourable to that climate of confidence which was necessary for any progress towards disarmament. Inauspicious also was the fact that the United Kingdom was envisaging the development of an independent Western European nuclear force within the next five years. The Committee must therefore not confine itself to adopting a resolution recommending the continuance of negotiations; it must also help the parties to find a solution. For that purpose, it should re-examine the basic principles underlying the draft treaties for general and complete disarmament, and in particular the principle of balance; it should study the question of preventing a deterioration in the world situation; it should consider what measures might tend to favour progress towards disarmament; and it should see how crises like the Cuban crisis could be avoided in the future.

3. His delegation had serious doubts about the principle of maintaining a balance during the various stages of disarmament. Up to now that question had been considered without any scientific precision; for example, no list of weapons to be considered offensive or defensive according to their nature and siting had ever been drawn up. In the circumstances, the parties would never be able to agree on whether a balance had been reached at the end of each stage or whether that balance lay in the arms that had been destroyed or the arms that remained. Thus the issue of balance became a mirage which in turn engendered the neurosis of inspection. The eight non-aligned Powers on the Eighteen-Nation Committee should therefore devote particular attention to that question. Since the problem was a technical rather than a purely political one, it might be useful to consider establishing a group of disarmament experts not employed by any Government who would be responsible for giving advice to the eight non-aligned Powers—for the great Powers already had their own experts, who could of course hardly be considered objective.

4. In regard to the measures to be taken to prevent a deterioriation of the world situation, he noted that the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union had pledged themselves to cooperate to reduce world tension. He feared, however, that if they were left to the conventional channels of diplomacy those good intentions might be overwhelmed by the collisions of the cold war. That was why it would be useful if the resolution which the Committee adopted were to make a constructive contribution towards helping the parties to find a solution. In that connexion, his delegation drew attention to the interest manifested in the establishment of nuclear-free zones; it noted the Brazilian draft resolution and the proposal made by the Irish representative, and felt that the parties should reconsider the Rapacki plan in that context.

5. In view of the fact that the Committee had for the first time fixed a deadline for one stage of disarmament—the discontinuance of nuclear tests—it could also, in its resolution on general disarmament, fix a date for the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, especially since the nuclear Powers already possessed sufficient weapons of that kind to blow up

the entire planet. His delegation would support any date which might be proposed for that purpose. If the General Assembly were not prepared to take such a decision, his delegation would instead suggest that the eight non-aligned members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee should make the setting of such a date one of their priorities. In that connexion, the problem of inspection should not prove insoluble, for the plants producing nuclear weapons were giant establishments, known to all the great Powers.

6. Lastly, the General Assembly could do much to hasten progress towards disarmament by using its psychological influence, particularly in regard to the economic effects of disarmament. The great Powers could, for example, reduce their present defence budgets by $1,000 million, an amount which they would place in escrow with the Secretary-General to be used, in accordance with the General Assembly's instructions, for the development of the less developed countries. Such a step would have a tremendous psychological effect. It would open the way to the conversion of war economies into peace economies and would be an earnest of the good faith of the Powers taking part in the disarmament negotiations.

7. Mr. GODBER (United Kingdom) said that all concerned must redouble their efforts to reach agreement on a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament; in particular, all efforts should be concentrated on resolving the differences of views that existed in regard to the first stage of disarmament. It was equally important that agreement should be reached on measures aimed at reducing international tension and building up confidence among States, which would in turn give impetus to the work of general and complete disarmament.

8. He keenly regretted the fact that little progress towards disarmament had been made at the Geneva negotiations, but thought that the discussions which had taken place had helped to clarify the whole range of political, military and scientific problems that remained to be solved.

9. The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament had worked under more favourable conditions than its predecessors. It had had the benefit of the presence of eight representatives of non-aligned countries; it had adopted the system of co-chairmanship, which had greatly assisted the orderly direction of its business; it had used as a guide the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations (A/4879); and it had had before it the United States and Soviet plans, which showed some "rapprochement" in the positions of the two sides. However, substantial differences still existed on several fundamental issues; specifically, on when the means of delivery of nuclear weapons should be eliminated, when military bases in foreign territories should be dismantled, and when nuclear weapons themselves should be eliminated. There was also a major difficulty over the verification of disarmament measures. Lastly, there was disagreement over the character of the arrangements which would be made to maintain peace in a disarmed or disarming world.

10. There were two vital points: first, the military balance between the two opposing sides must be preserved during the disarmament process, and secondly, there must be certainty that the disarmament measures would be faithfully implemented. The United States plan, which his Government supported, proposed progressive and balanced disarmament, took account of the present state of international relations and endeavoured to build up among States the degree of confidence which was a prerequisite to the success of disarmament. The Soviet plan provided for the destruction of all nuclear delivery vehicles—except for a limited number of certain types of missiles—and the elimination of foreign military bases during the first stage. At Geneva the delegations of the Western Powers had raised three basic objections to the Soviet proposal for the elimination of all nuclear delivery vehicles in the first stage: they had considered that it would be highly difficult to implement such a step during the first stage, and in particular to introduce the necessary verification procedures; they had stressed the difficulty of defining what constituted an actual or potential nuclear delivery vehicle and what constituted an indisputably conventional weapon; and lastly, they had maintained that the Soviet plan failed to deal with the problem of improvised nuclear delivery vehicles. His delegation had noted with interest the modification which the Soviet Union had made in its proposals—to which reference had been made by the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs in his statement in the Assembly's general debate (1127th plenary meeting)—and hoped that the Soviet delegation would explain its proposals in greater detail during the forthcoming negotiations in the Eighteen-Nation Committee at Geneva.

11. For the moment, those two Soviet proposals for the first stage—the elimination of nuclear delivery vehicles and the elimination of foreign military bases—were in contradiction with the principle of balance set forth in the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations (A/4879). For those measures would entail the dissolution of the system of Western defensive alliances and the fragmentation of the armed forces of the Western European countries. On the other hand, the Soviet Union, with its Warsaw Pact allies, would be left with homogeneous and mobile conventional forces operating on interior lines of communication and within easy reach of possible targets.

12. The vital question of verification had three essential elements: verification of the destruction of agreed types of weapons, verification of the limitation and cessation of the production of armaments, and verification of weapons retained by the parties. Although both the United States and the Soviet plans agreed that there must be verification of the destruction of armaments and of production facilities, the Soviet Government had so far refused to accept any procedures which would give assurance that the agreed levels of armaments and forces were not exceeded and that stocks of weapons were not being held clandestinely. The USSR Government had clearly stated that inspection would be limited to the sites where the destruction had taken place. But such inspection could not prove that 100 per cent of the stock of a certain category of weapon had been destroyed. In an attempt to meet Soviet apprehensions, the Western Powers had proposed a compromise plan of zonal inspection, to which the Soviet Union had apparently not yet given serious consideration. The Soviet representative had said at the 1267th meeting that the object of the control measures proposed by the Western Powers was nothing other than the gathering of intelligence information. The United Kingdom delegation strongly protested against such an assertion. If the Soviet Union would only agree to

co-operate with the Western Powers, it would undoubtedly be possible to devise methods which would allay all its fears. If progress was to be made on that vital question, it was essential that the Soviet Union should change its attitude. In that connexion, it was interesting to note that the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Mr. Khrushchev, had agreed that United Nations representatives should verify the dismantling of the missile sites in Cuba. It was to be hoped that that decision indicated a new Soviet approach to the problem of inspection in the field of disarmament.

13. One further question of special importance was that of peace-keeping machinery. Procedures must be introduced for the peaceful settlement of disputes, and arrangements must be made to create a United Nations peace force; for it was essential that as national forces disappeared, international forces should become available for peace-keeping duties.

14. In addition, there was an urgent need to reach agreement on measures to lessen international tension and build up confidence among States. In that connexion, measures must be taken to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding and misinformation. The measures in question, some of which were already described in the United States and Soviet plans, included advance notification of military manoeuvres and movements, the exchange of military missions, and the stationing of observers at major communications centres. It was to be hoped that the Eighteen-Nation Committee would be able to devise measures of that kind, which would reduce the danger of war during the disarmament process.

15. He had listened with interest to the observations of the Indian representative, and to the proposal of the United Arab Republic representative that the General Assembly might urge that disarmament negotiations should be continued in a spirit of constructive compromise and that the Eighteen-Nation Committee should present a report to the Assembly within a reasonable period of time. It would seem that that kind of initiative would be the most helpful action that the Assembly could take at the present stage of the negotiations.

16. He hoped that at Geneva, the Eighteen-Nation Committee would get down to real negotiations and make the maximum use of the method of informal discussion as well as relying on formal debates. If the Committee succeeded in making progress, it would be starting to build a foundation for the growth of mutual confidence among States, which was the greatest need of the present divided world. The objective should be to find measures that would rid the world of suspicion and fear, as well as of the weapons of death which inspired and justified those fears.

17. Mr. MELO FRANCO (Brazil) said that the recent international crisis, which had led mankind to the brink of disaster, had shown that disarmament was in truth the most urgent and most important of all the questions which were claiming the General Assembly's attention at its seventeenth session. The nature of the present nuclear armaments race had reduced the nations to equality in the face of the common peril; and because of that very fact, security was now linked once and for all to peace, since without it there could be no security for any nation, however powerful. The problem of disarmament, therefore, transcended the limits of politics and of the cold war, and the great Powers had the moral duty of making a clean sweep of their rivalries, competitions, fears and desires for supremacy in order to solve it rapidly.

18. The results of the work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee had so far been hardly encouraging. In the most important part of its task, that of drawing up a treaty on general and complete disarmament, agreement had been reached only on a few preliminary articles. While some progress had been made in the field of conventional weapons, a deadlock persisted, despite the efforts of the eight non-aligned countries, in the most important question, the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons and means of delivery. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that there was now greater understanding of the various points of view and a greater objectivity in regard to the most practical way of tackling the problems. The great Powers were coming to understand that they could no longer entrench themselves in their old cold-war positions, and were little by little entering into a dialogue where before there had been only discordant monologues. That more auspicious atmosphere was largely attributable to the patient and constructive work of the eight non-aligned countries. Those countries represented neither an ideological bloc nor a third force in international affairs; they were only a diplomatic group belonging to neither of the two great military alliances, and it was in that capacity that they had acted in all phases of the Geneva negotiations. Perhaps some Governments which had doubted the usefulness of the participation of the non-nuclear countries might now, faced with the facts, feel justified in withdrawing their reservations and objections.

19. So far as concerned the methods of work employed by the Eighteen-Nation Committee, his delegation wondered whether the procedure of considering the articles of the two draft treaties simultaneously was best adapted to the needs and the urgency of the work. It might perhaps be more useful to try first of all to reach agreement on certain principles, taking as a point of departure, for example, the joint statement of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations (A/4879) which the United States and the Soviet Union had submitted in September 1961.

20. With regard to the question of control, he doubted whether the disarmament negotiations could usefully be pursued at the political level alone, without taking account of technical and scientific progress. None of the great Powers would consent to disarm unless it had the most absolute guarantees that the other parties would respect the obligations they had undertaken in the treaty. It was for that reason that his delegation, among others, had suggested to the Eighteen-Nation Committee the establishment at Geneva of a group of experts to study technical questions relating to control without the right to take part in the political negotiations, which would continue in other organs of the Conference.

21. Brazil had argued during the Geneva negotiations that priority should be given to efforts aimed at the conclusion of an agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests, and to measures designed to prohibit the dissemination of nuclear weapons and to prevent the outbreak of war by accident, miscalculation or failure of communications. Such measures were most urgently needed because they were directly related to the possibility of a nuclear conflagration. Recent

events, which had proved that nuclear weapons had been introduced into Latin America, had prompted Brazil to submit to the First Committee a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.312) on the denuclearization of Latin America and Africa. In taking that step, Brazil had wished to contribute to the solution not only of a continental crisis which had become a world problem but also of the general problem of disarmament. The Brazilian draft resolution, which was largely based on General Assembly resolution 1652 (XVI), offered a means by which Latin America and Africa might be withdrawn from the catastrophic nuclear weapons race. Since its submission, Bolivia and Chile had expressed their desire to become sponsors of the draft resolution and the representatives of the United States and Ceylon had expressed their approval of it. His delegation was consulting with other delegations with a view to drafting a revised text which would take account of various suggestions, in particular those made by the representatives of African countries.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

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