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Agenda item 27

QUESTION OF GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Maxime-Léopold ZOLLNER (Dahomey)

1. The item "Question of general and complete disarmament: report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament" was included by the Secretary-General in the provisional agenda of the twenty-third session (A/7150) on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 2342 B (XXII) of 19 December 1967 and 2373 (XXII) of 12 June 1968.
2. At its 174th meeting, on 25 September 1968, the General Committee recommended the inclusion of the item in the agenda (A/7250).
3. At its 1676th plenary meeting, on 27 September 1968, the General Assembly approved the recommendation of the General Committee (A/7260/Rev.3) and allocated the item to the First Committee for consideration and report (A/7261/Rev.3).
4. The item was considered at the 1606th to 1617th meetings from 12 to 22 November, at the 1623rd to 1635th meetings from 27 November to 10 December, and at the 1643rd meeting on 17 December 1968.
5. The following draft resolutions and amendments were submitted under the item:
 - (a) A draft resolution submitted on 12 November 1968 by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.1/L.443), also submitted under agenda item 94 (see A/7444, para. 6), by which the General Assembly would: (1) attach great importance to the measures for stopping the nuclear arms race and achieving disarmament which were contained in the memorandum of 1 July 1968 of the Government of the USSR; (2) request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to transmit the Memorandum of 1 July 1968 of the Government of the USSR concerning urgent measures to stop

the arms race and achieve disarmament and the records of the meetings of the First Committee of the General Assembly relating to the discussion of the relevant agenda item to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament; (3) request the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to undertake negotiations, as a matter of urgency and taking account of the agreement reached on the provisional agenda for its future work, concerning the urgent measures for stopping the arms race and achieving disarmament which were contained in the memorandum of 1 July 1968 of the Government of the USSR and to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session.

(b) A draft resolution submitted on 18 November 1968 by Canada, Denmark, Ghana, Hungary, India, Mexico, Poland, Sweden, the United Arab Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (A/C.1/L.444) subsequently co-sponsored by Pakistan (A/C.1/L.444/Add.1), Mongolia (A/C.1/L.444/Add.2), Austria, Chile, Finland and the Netherlands (A/C.1/L.444/Add.3), Iran (A/C.1/L.444/Add.4), Australia and Ethiopia (A/C.1/L.444/Add.5), Belgium (A/C.1/L.444/Add.6) and Mauritania (A/C.1/L.444/Add.7), which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Reaffirming the recommendations of its resolution 2162 B (XXI) calling for strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, condemning all actions contrary to those objectives and inviting all States to accede to that Protocol,

"Considering that the possibility of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons constitutes a serious threat to mankind,

"Believing that the people of the world should be made aware of the consequences of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons,

"Having considered the report of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee which recommended that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of such weapons,

"Noting the interest in a report on various aspects of the problem of chemical, bacteriological and other biological weapons which has been expressed by many Governments and the welcome given to the recommendation of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee by the Secretary-General in his annual report for 1967-1968,

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"Believing that such a study would provide a valuable contribution to the consideration in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee of the problems connected with chemical and bacteriological weapons,

"Recalling the value of the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons,

"1. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a concise report in accordance with the proposal in part II of his introduction to the annual report for 1967-1968 and in accordance with the recommendation of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee contained in paragraph 26 of its report (document A/7189);

"2. Recommends that the report be based on accessible material and prepared with the assistance of qualified consultant experts appointed by the Secretary-General;

"3. Calls upon Governments, national and international scientific institutions and organizations to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the preparation of the report;

"4. Requests that the report be transmitted to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, the Security Council and the General Assembly at an early date, if possible by 1 July 1969, and to the Governments of Member States in time to permit its consideration at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly;

"5. Recommends that Governments give the report wide distribution in their respective languages, through various media of communication, so as to acquaint public opinion with its contents;

"6. Reiterates its call for strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925 and invites all States to accede to that Protocol."

(c) Amendments to the above draft resolution submitted on 19 November 1968 by Malta (A/C.1/L.445) subsequently co-sponsored by Trinidad and Tobago (A/C.1/L.445/Add.1), by which

(i) The second and third preambular paragraphs would be replaced by the following:

"Considering that many of the chemical, bacteriological and biological weapons which have been or are being developed may be used as weapons of mass destruction and, as such, constitute a serious threat to mankind,

"Believing that the people of the world should be made aware of this threat,";

(ii) The following would be added at the end of operative paragraph 1:

"which would include an indication of the nature, means of delivery and effects, including economic and health implications, of the possible use of chemical, bacteriological and other biological means of warfare, with particular reference to the position of States that are unable to establish adequate measures of detection and protection against the possible use of these means of warfare;".

(d) A draft resolution submitted on 21 November 1968 by Denmark, Iceland, Malta and Norway (A/C.1/L.446), by which the General Assembly would (1) request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to ascertain the position of Member Governments: (a) on undertaking an obligation to register with the Secretary-General all imports and exports of conventional arms, ammunition and implements of war, (b) on authorizing the Secretary-General to collect and publish at regular intervals, information on the transfer of conventional arms, ammunition and implements of war, and (c) on the practical measures to be taken to that end; (2) request the Secretary-General to report on the results of his inquiry to the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth session for deliberation and reference, as appropriate, to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

(e) A draft resolution submitted on 25 November 1968 by Brazil, Burma, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden and the United Arab Republic (A/C.1/L.448), a revised text of which was submitted on 4 December (A/C.1/L.448/Rev.1). At the 1632nd meeting, on 6 December, the representative of the United Kingdom submitted an oral amendment to draft resolution A/C.1/L.448/Rev.1, by which a new fourth preambular paragraph would be inserted. At the same meeting, this oral amendment was accepted by the sponsors of the revised draft resolution and incorporated in a further revised text thereof (A/C.1/L.448/Rev.2), also co-sponsored by Bulgaria and Romania, which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Considering that one of the main purposes of the United Nations is to save mankind from the scourge of war,

"Convinced that the armaments race, in particular the nuclear arms race, constitutes a threat to peace,

"Believing that it is imperative to exert further efforts towards reaching agreement on general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

/...

"Noting with satisfaction the agreement of the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of the United States of America to enter into bilateral discussions on the limitation and the reduction of both offensive strategic nuclear weapons delivery systems and systems of defence against ballistic missiles.

"Having received the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, to which are annexed documents presented by the delegations of the eight non-aligned members of the Committee and by Italy, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States,

"Noting the memorandum of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning urgent measures to stop the arms race and achieve disarmament of 1 July 1968 and other proposals for collateral measures which have been submitted at the ENDC,

"Recalling its resolutions 1767 (XVII) of 21 November 1962, 1908 (XVIII) of 27 November 1963, 2031 (XX) of 3 December 1965, 2162 C (XXI) of 5 December 1966, 2344 (XXII) of 19 December 1967 and 2342 B (XXII) of 19 December 1967,

"1. Requests the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to pursue renewed efforts towards achieving substantial progress in reaching agreement on the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and urgently to analyse the plans already under consideration and others that might be put forward to see how in particular rapid progress could be made in the field of nuclear disarmament;

"2. Further requests the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to continue its urgent efforts to negotiate collateral measures of disarmament;

"3. Decides to refer to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament all documents and records of the meetings of the First Committee concerning all matters related to the disarmament question;

"4. Requests the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to resume its work as early as possible and to report to the General Assembly, as appropriate, on the progress achieved."

(f) A draft resolution submitted on 2 December 1968 by Cyprus (A/C.1/L.449), also submitted under agenda item 96 (see A/7445, para. 7 (a)). A revised text of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.449/Rev.1) was submitted on 9 December, by which the General Assembly, considering the availability of the Disarmament Commission, would (1) request the Disarmament Commission as soon as it reconvened (a) to give studied consideration to the problem of disarmament in its relation to international

security through the United Nations with a view to an integrated solution; (b) to present its report to the General Assembly if possible at its twenty-fifth session; (2) request the Secretary-General to provide the Disarmament Commission with all necessary documentation and technical assistance of consultants where necessary.

6. At the 1630th meeting, on 5 December, the representative of Denmark, on behalf of the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.446, stated that he would not press this draft resolution to a vote, on the understanding that this matter is covered by operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/L.448/Rev.2, under which the Assembly would decide to refer to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament all documents and records of the meetings of the First Committee concerning all matters related to the disarmament question.

7. At the 1632nd meeting, on 6 December, the Chairman stated that it had been agreed that draft resolution A/C.1/L.443, also submitted under item 94 (see A/7444, para. 6), would not be put to a vote.

8. At the 1635th meeting, on 10 December, the representative of Poland informed the Committee that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.444 (see para. 5 (b) above) had agreed on a revised text of operative paragraph 2 (A/C.1/L.444/Rev.1) reading as follows:

"2. Recommends that the report be based on accessible material and prepared with the assistance of qualified consultant experts appointed by the Secretary-General, taking into account the views expressed and the suggestions made during the discussion of this item at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly."

9. At the same meeting, the representative of Malta, on behalf of his delegation and that of Trinidad and Tobago, stated that they would not press to a vote their amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/L.444 contained in document A/C.1/L.445 and Add.1 (see para. 5 (c) above).

10. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee read a statement by the Secretary-General (A/C.1/L.457 and Corr.1) on the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/C.1/L.444/Rev.1.

11. At the same meeting, the representative of Rwanda requested a separate vote on the last part of operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/L.444/Rev.1, beginning with the words "and invites...". The representative of Hungary opposed the motion for a separate vote. The Committee then rejected the motion to vote

separately on the last part of operative paragraph 6 by 29 votes to 2, with 63 abstentions.

12. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the revised twenty-one Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.444/Rev.1) by 112 votes to none, with 1 abstention (see para. 15 below, draft resolution A).

13. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the revised ten-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.448/Rev.2) by 109 votes to none, with 4 abstentions (see para. 15 below, draft resolution B).

14. At the 1643rd meeting, on 17 December, the representative of Cyprus stated that he would not press draft resolution A/C.1/L.449/Rev.1 to a vote at the current session.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

15. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Question of general and complete disarmament

A

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the recommendations of its resolution 2162 B (XXI) of 5 December 1966 calling for strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, condemning all actions contrary to those objectives and inviting all States to accede to that Protocol,

Considering that the possibility of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons constitutes a serious threat to mankind,

Believing that the people of the world should be made aware of the consequences of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons,

Having considered the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament^{1/} which recommended that the Secretary-General appoint a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of such weapons,

^{1/} A/7189.

Noting the interest in a report on various aspects of the problem of chemical, bacteriological and other biological weapons which has been expressed by many Governments and the welcome given to the recommendation of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament by the Secretary-General in the introduction to his annual report on the work of the Organization for 1967-1968,^{2/}

Believing that such a study would provide a valuable contribution to the consideration in the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament of the problems connected with chemical and bacteriological weapons,

Recalling the value of the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons,^{3/}

1. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare a concise report in accordance with the proposal in section II of the introduction to his annual report for 1967-1968 and in accordance with the recommendation of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament contained in paragraph 26 of its report;^{4/}
2. Recommends that the report be based on accessible material and prepared with the assistance of qualified consultant experts appointed by the Secretary-General, taking into account the views expressed and the suggestions made during the discussion of this item at the twenty-third session of the General Assembly;
3. Calls upon Governments, national and international scientific institutions and organizations to co-operate with the Secretary-General in the preparation of the report;
4. Requests that the report be transmitted to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the Security Council and the General Assembly at an early date, if possible by 1 July 1969, and to the Governments of Member States in time to permit its consideration at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly;
5. Recommends that Governments give the report wide distribution in their respective languages, through various media of communication, so as to acquaint public opinion with its contents;

^{2/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 1A (A/7201/Add.1).

^{3/} United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68/IX.1.

^{4/} A/7189.

6. Reiterates its call for strict observance by all States of the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925 and invites all States to accede to that Protocol.

B

The General Assembly,

Considering that one of the main purposes of the United Nations is to save mankind from the scourge of war,

Convinced that the armaments race, in particular the nuclear arms race, constitutes a threat to peace,

Believing that it is imperative to exert further efforts towards reaching agreement on general and complete disarmament under effective international control,

Noting with satisfaction the agreement of the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of the United States of America to enter into bilateral discussions on the limitation and the reduction of both offensive strategic nuclear weapons delivery systems and systems of defence against ballistic missiles,

Having received the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament,^{5/} to which are annexed documents presented by the delegations of the eight non-aligned members of the Committee and by Italy, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America,

Noting the Memorandum of 1 July 1968 of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning urgent measures to stop the arms race and achieve disarmament^{6/} and other proposals for collateral measures which have been submitted at the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament,

Recalling its resolutions 1767 (XVII) of 21 November 1962, 1908 (XVIII) of 27 November 1963, 2031 (XX) of 3 December 1965, 2162 C (XXI) of 5 December 1966, 2344 (XXII) of 19 December 1967 and 2342 B (XXII) of 19 December 1967,

5/ A/7189.

6/ A/7134.

1. Requests the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to pursue renewed efforts towards achieving substantial progress in reaching agreement on the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and urgently to analyse the plans already under consideration and others that might be put forward to see how in particular rapid progress could be made in the field of nuclear disarmament;

2. Further requests the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to continue its urgent efforts to negotiate collateral measures of disarmament;

3. Decides to refer to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament all documents and records of the meetings of the First Committee concerning all matters related to the disarmament question;

4. Requests the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament to resume its work as early as possible and to report to the General Assembly, as appropriate, on the progress achieved.
