

United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE, 1204th
MEETING

Tuesday, 28 November 1961,
at 11.5 a.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 19:</i>	
<i>Question of disarmament (continued)</i>	215

Chairman: Mr. Mario AMADEO (Argentina).

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

AGENDA ITEM 19

Question of disarmament (A/4868 and Corr.1, A/4879, A/4880, A/4887, A/4891, A/4892, A/C.1/856, A/C.1/L.297 and Add.1-2) (continued)

1. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) regretted that the question of general and complete disarmament had not been discussed at the very beginning of the session, since there would then have been room for a broader exchange of views; but it was true that the difficulties encountered concerning the organization of the work were to some extent the consequence of international tension.
2. The current situation was not calculated to encourage confidence between countries. The Western Powers, particularly the United States of America, had transformed the Federal Republic of Germany into a militaristic and aggressive nation, with the result that they found themselves compelled to give way to the wishes of the revenge-seeking Germans. In 1952 the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Adenauer, had said that the rearmament of West Germany must pave the way for a new order in Eastern Europe, and in 1954 he had spoken of recovering the Soviet zone when the Western world had become sufficiently powerful. Since then, nothing had changed. It was regrettable that the talks between the President of the United States, Mr. Kennedy, and Chancellor Adenauer had resulted only in a reaffirmation of the policy of "positions of strength", involving extension of the length of military service, increases in military stocks, and "civil mobilization" measures. According to The New York Times of 23 November 1961, Chancellor Adenauer had received the assurance that "disengagement" would not be considered except within the framework of general, inspected and controlled disarmament—and then only if there was also a "political pull-back", in other words a reunification of Germany. The solution of the disarmament problem thus seemed to be contingent on the question of German reunification. If such were the intention of the United States Government, its representatives should say so more clearly.
3. Tension was also increasing daily in South-East Asia, where an armed conflict might at any moment be provoked through direct or indirect intervention. A very strange discussion was taking place in the United States regarding the best way of intervening in South Viet-Nam in order to support a puppet Government, without any attention being paid to the fact that such action would be a flagrant violation of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet Nam, signed at Geneva on 20 July 1954. Another particularly disquieting event had been the dispatch of American warships to the vicinity of the coast of the Dominican Republic with a view to safeguarding the interests of certain American circles.
4. Given the existing tenseness of the international situation, all the greater value attached to the possibilities offered by the joint statement, by the United States and the Soviet Union, of agreed principles for disarmament negotiations (A/4879). Those principles should enable the future negotiating body to conduct its work from a firm starting-point. In fact, the joint statement reproduced the provisions of a statement which had been presented to the Conference of the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament by the socialist countries on 8 April 1960, as well as most of the points contained in the draft resolution which twelve non-aligned countries had submitted at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly (A/C.1/L.259 and Add.1-2) and which had not been adopted because of the opposition of the Western Powers.
5. The Committee also had before it plans for general and complete disarmament submitted by the Soviet Union (A/C.1/856) and by the United States (A/4891). The Soviet plan provided for a maximum measure of disarmament in the very first stage, involving a considerable reduction in armaments and the destruction of the means of delivering nuclear weapons; that would enable the danger of a surprise attack to be eliminated. It defined the various stages of disarmament with the maximum of clarity, and fixed the shortest possible time limits for the implementation of the measures planned for each stage. The United States proposals, on the other hand, provided only for very small reductions in armaments during the first two stages, and solely in the field of conventional armaments—which meant that during that time the means of launching aggression would remain more or less intact. Moreover, the control measures foreseen would, by giving a potential aggressor the necessary information, enable him to launch a surprise attack and to start a nuclear war. The differences between the two plans were consequently great, but the agreement reached on principles should make it possible to achieve practical results, if the Western Powers were really desirous of achieving them.
6. The socialist countries were genuine advocates of control and inspection. However, they could not agree to the control being applied not to measures of dis-

armament but to existing or remaining armaments. The attitude of the Western countries was based on the existing lack of confidence between the States concerned. The socialist countries, too, had good reason for being mistrustful. The resurrection of the old policy of "positions of strength", and the persistence in United States military circles of a strong current of opinion in favour of preventive action, explained why the USSR and the socialist community of nations could never agree that control should be applied to existing armaments. Control and inspection could, as the statements of Western military specialists confirmed, easily degenerate into espionage pure and simple. Indeed, certain General Staffs had not hesitated to violate international law and custom in order to obtain information on military installations in other countries. If peace had been safeguarded so far, it was possibly because the potential aggressor had not possessed all the information which he required in order to launch a successful attack. Nevertheless, if the Western Powers were so strongly attached to the principle of inspection, there was nothing to prevent their accepting the Soviet plan for general and complete disarmament and then proposing, themselves, all the measures of disarmament control that they desired.

7. The negotiating body should not be too large, but should reflect the main trends of opinion currently existing throughout the world. The presence of representatives of the non-aligned countries would undeniably be useful, for no one had ever challenged their intentions or their good faith. Even the Western countries, apparently, were convinced that the non-aligned nations sincerely wanted general and complete disarmament. The negotiating body should be in a position to start its work with the least possible delay, if the General Assembly was to hold a special session in June 1962 with a view to considering and adopting the agreement prepared.

8. Mr. DE MELO FRANCO (Brazil) observed that policies were now based on the availability of nuclear armaments and that the Powers concerned, irresistibly driven by mutual mistrust to take risks, were losing control of the forces which they possessed. The threat of ever more terrible reprisals paradoxically placed the nuclear Powers in the same position as that of the weaker countries. Both, therefore, had the same interest in escaping from the present impasse of the arms race. In order to do so, it was not enough for them to lessen the very serious political friction existing in various parts of the world, e.g., at Berlin, in South-East Asia and in the Caribbean, for despite their importance the issues in question were secondary to the problem of the arms race. The main requirement was to reach an agreement on general and complete disarmament. That agreement should take the form of a juridical instrument incorporating all the guarantees which lack of confidence between the principal parties made essential, since, understandably enough, the Powers in question did not wish to imperil the balance of forces by taking premature measures. They would therefore have to be convinced that well-thought-out disarmament measures would not threaten their security; in other words, the disarmament plan would have to be satisfactory for all.

9. Both the United States and the Soviet Union recognized the danger of the arms race and the need for disarmament, as was shown by the speech made by the President of the United States in the General Assembly (1013th plenary meeting) and the statement made to the

Committee on 15 November by the Soviet Union representative (1195th meeting). That conviction was also affirmed in the joint statement of the United States and the Soviet Union (A/4879). Moreover, the statements of both Governments regarding the resumption of negotiations for the cessation of nuclear tests revealed a very welcome similarity of views on disarmament. As to the position of the non-aligned countries, it might be summed up by the Declaration adopted at the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade in September 1961, which stressed the need for general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

10. Brazil, for its part, had always been in favour of disarmament, and its position in the matter was determined by no political motive. It was in favour of disarmament measures irrespective of their origin—Western, Eastern or other—for it judged the proposals solely on the merits of their content and objectivity. Brazil had always advocated the peaceful settlement of international disputes, and its armed forces were designed solely for the maintenance of domestic law and order and of national security.

11. Although the exchanges of views which had taken place between the United States and the Soviet Union since the resumed fifteenth session of the Assembly had been disappointing, they had enabled those countries to reach agreement on a number of common principles (A/4879) which, despite the remaining differences of opinion, represented progress, if only in that the right of veto in the matter of inspection had been renounced. Those principles combined a number of the proposals made by various States during past negotiations on disarmament, and certainly deserved the General Assembly's approbation. Admittedly the fixing of progressive stages, and the determination of what was meant by "balance", might present difficulties. It was possible, for instance, that one of the Powers might be able to offset its relative weakness in conventional military resources only through possession of nuclear weapons and that it would therefore be unable to agree to reduce its weapons of mass destruction unless the potential adversary's conventional military resources were readjusted, whereas the other Power might refuse to accept that concept of "balance". Those, however, were practical problems which could always be solved by specific measures if the States concerned were really convinced of the ineluctable need for disarmament.

12. The States involved must seize every opportunity to embark upon disarmament, even—as had already occurred—through unilateral restrictions, which had the advantage of proving good will, easing tension on the part of the potential adversary and causing him to take similar action, if only for the sake of world opinion. Without waiting for the adoption of a complete and detailed plan, those States could reach agreement on limited measures which would in no way prejudice their security but would have the merit of testing practical systems applicable to general and complete disarmament, which was the main though possibly far-off objective. They should not, for instance, await the completion of absolutely perfect and infallible inspection techniques before agreeing to apply such techniques. It would be enough, as a start, to prevent surprise attack and to render impossible any fatal error that might provoke unjustified retaliation. Furthermore, those States should not be unduly concerned over the composition of the negotiating body. His delegation, for its part, believed that

States which did not possess powerful armed forces could contribute towards preserving humanity from a general catastrophe, and that all the negotiations should be held within the framework of the United Nations. But it also believed that protracted discussions on the composition of the negotiating body served only to delay the resumption of negotiations. Since the great Powers had stated that they agreed on the basic problems, that the question should be considered as soon as possible and that they were willing to negotiate partial measures without prejudicing the total programme for general and controlled disarmament, it only remained for them to prove the sincerity of their intentions by their actions.

13. At the fifteenth session of the General Assembly (877th plenary meeting), the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Macmillan, had emphasized the advantage of proceeding with technical studies on disarmament independently of political negotiations, and the United Kingdom delegation had submitted in that sense, at the fifteenth session, a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.251) which had not been put to the vote. Yet that proposal seemed to be still valid, for the solution of scientific, technical and administrative problems was an essential pre-condition for the achievement of general or partial agreements. Indeed, the simultaneous discussion of technical and political problems complicated negotiation and could only slow it down. Moreover, such technical studies should not necessarily be confined to the fields mentioned in the United Kingdom draft resolution, namely, inspection and control. For example, a body of experts might be instructed to make a technical study of the various disarmament plans and, in particular, to specify points of agreement as well as differences of view, reconcilable or otherwise. Such objective studies would be of value both to the Committee and to the negotiating body. The resumption of negotiations would naturally in no way depend on completion of the tasks of the working groups, which would continue their studies even if political negotiations were interrupted. Far from delaying the political negotiations, those technical studies would accelerate and facilitate them.

14. Mr. KISELEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) was disturbed to note that, despite the efforts made to achieve disarmament and ensure peace, the arms race was becoming more frenzied than ever and would inevitably end in a nuclear disaster, even if no country wanted war. The United States alone was devoting \$150 million a day to the upkeep of its armed forces and the development of new types of conventional and nuclear weapons. Together with the United Kingdom, it possessed stocks of nuclear weapons equivalent to 30,000 million tons of TNT. At present, eleven countries possessed the technical and economic means of putting a nuclear weapons programme into operation, but in twenty years or so there would probably be thirty of them. Faced by such a prospect, one could not but share the apprehensions expressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and approve his suggestion for the formation of a "non-nuclear club".

15. While the Soviet Union had been reducing its military forces and budget and sincerely seeking general and complete disarmament together with the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, the United States had not only itself been continuing the arms race but had also carried along with it the other members of NATO, particularly the Federal Republic of Germany. While the Committee had been consider-

ing the question of disarmament, the Deputy Secretary of Defense of the United States had said in Bonn that his country would respect its undertakings with regard to the allocation of nuclear arms to the armed forces of West Germany, with which an agreement had also been concluded for the provision of \$600 million worth of arms and military equipment. In addition, the order for American Pershing (surface-to-surface) missiles had been confirmed, and West Germany had embarked upon the mass production of modern jet aircraft and had launched its first submarine since the Second World War. All those facts, coupled with the results of Chancellor Adenauer's visit to Washington, showed that the revenge-seeking Germans intended to make use of NATO for the achievement of their aggressive designs.

16. Under cover of aid to foreign countries, the militarists in the United States were trying to build up reserves of cannon-fodder all over the world: it had been estimated in the United States that, while the annual cost of maintaining an American soldier amounted to \$3,859, the cost to the United States for the pay, feeding and equipping of a Greek soldier, for example, was only \$391. The United States was also establishing nuclear weapons bases on the territory of its allies. In the United Kingdom alone, there were said to be sixteen air bases for nuclear bombers, four rocket-launching sites and three depots for hydrogen bombs; the United Kingdom representative should ponder that situation before accusing the Soviet Union of being responsible for current tensions. In reality, it was the Western Powers which, by their actions and propaganda, were creating a veritable war psychosis. It was enough to mention the United States refusal to freeze military budgets, and the costly shelter-construction programme in that country, the real aim of which was to convince the people of the inevitability of nuclear war.

17. The fact that the Western bloc had not supported the proposal to "denuclearize" Africa was a further proof of lack of good will on the part of the United States and its allies. Those Powers were really interested only in such disarmament as would give them military advantages. That was perfectly clear from the United States disarmament programme (A/4891), the first stages of which were planned in such a way that they would result in total control and partial disarmament. The Soviet Union could obviously not accept a formula the practical result of which would be a system of espionage for the benefit of the United States. The United States was really trying to elude the essence of the problem, by stressing, *inter alia*, the need for an international organ to maintain order and keep the peace in a disarmed world. It would be time enough to think of establishing such an organ when the main objective—general and complete disarmament—had been attained.

18. As for the negotiating body, the Byelorussian delegation agreed with the Canadian representative that the number of members was a secondary issue; the important thing was that the parties should be equally represented on it and that its membership should reflect the world political situation, particularly the increasingly important role played by the neutral countries.

19. The General Assembly could facilitate the conclusion of an agreement on general and complete disarmament by approving the USSR-United States statement of agreed principles (A/4879) and by establishing a

disarmament committee to prepare a draft treaty; in addition, a special session of the General Assembly should be convened in 1962 to consider the draft treaty. The Byelorussian delegation hoped that the United States would be able to join in sponsoring a draft resolution embodying those provisions.

20. Mr. BOUZIRI (Tunisia) said that the arms race was a paradox, since the Powers which were frantically arming, giving the reason that they had to defend themselves and even other countries, risked annihilation if a war broke out. The settlement of the disarmament problem was, therefore, an urgent necessity, not only because of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons but also because of the conventional weapons used by the colonial Powers. In that connexion, the Tunisian delegation treated with reserve the statements of those Powers when they said that they wanted disarmament. There was no doubt that one of the obstacles to general and complete disarmament was the survival of the colonial system, which was using war as a means of preserving itself. To bring the colonialists to reason, all that was needed was for the two big Powers to come to an agreement and for their influence, backed by public opinion, to be irresistibly exerted. Unfortunately, their minds were clouded by mutual suspicion which led them to explode nuclear devices, to flout resolutions of the General Assembly, and to expose the world to the threat of a monstrous war.

21. Despite a note of despair often sounded during the debates, there were certain positive factors which should be recorded. First, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed on the principles for disarmament negotiations—an appreciable step forward. Secondly, the Soviet Union had recently decided to resume negotiations on the discontinuance of tests, and the new statement of the Soviet Government (A/4990) seemed, at first sight, to have its value. Thirdly, the United States and the Soviet Union had agreed to negotiate regarding the composition of the negotiating body. Lastly, the Committee and the General Assembly had firmly stated their determination to use all legitimate means at their disposal to save the peace, and they had adopted some very important resolutions for that purpose.

22. In the view of the Tunisian delegation, it would be possible to go much further and much faster if the disagreement regarding the composition of the negotiating body could be removed. The participation of the non-aligned States seemed, there, to constitute the greatest difficulty. In order to dispel any misunderstanding, it must above all be stressed—as the President of the Republic of Tunisia had said at the Belgrade Conference—that the non-aligned States had never formed a bloc and did not wish to do so. It was

precisely for that reason that the participation of those countries was extremely desirable, and that it should be as extensive as possible. They could help, objectively and impartially, to build peace on the foundation of disarmament.

23. The two plans for general and complete disarmament presented by the United States (A/4891) and the Soviet Union (A/C.1/856) provided a very solid basis for discussion, despite the differences between them. The most serious of those differences related to control. On that subject, the Tunisian delegation was convinced that strict international control was the *sine qua non* of disarmament. But in any plan, however ingenious, there might be an irreducible margin of risk, engendering distrust on both sides. That margin must, therefore, be as narrow as possible, and in any event it should never be wide enough to endanger the existence of a State. That was why the control systems proposed by the United States and the Soviet Union should be examined with the greatest care. In particular, it was essential that each side should pay careful attention to the criticism directed against it, striving to improve its proposals and even, if necessary, to recast them completely. The disarmament negotiations ought to produce a satisfactory solution of the control problem, since the latter, apart from the legal and psychological issues which it raised, was primarily technical in nature and was bound to be solved if both parties were determined to achieve general and complete disarmament and showed a minimum of good will.

24. For the reasons which he had just given, the Tunisian delegation had decided to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/L.297 and Add.1-2. The measure envisaged therein was a constructive way of approaching the problem of disarmament, and should be unanimously approved by the Committee. In the same spirit, the Tunisian delegation would support any proposal, however modest, which seemed likely to lead to general and complete disarmament under strict international control and which aimed at outlawing war for good. For instance, it would support any proposal designed to increase the role of the United Nations in the search for a solution of the disarmament problem. In its view, a special session of the General Assembly would have to be convened, sooner or later, to discuss the question. The Tunisian delegation also felt that a progress report on the negotiations regarding the composition of the negotiating body should be submitted to the Organization as soon as possible and that the body in question, once established, should itself submit progress reports.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.