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

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. LALL (India) said he wished to draw the Committee's attention to certain aspects of the disarmament problem which he considered very important.
2. His country's delegation had on some occasions regretted the absence of the delegation of France from the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament at Geneva and had asked the two co-Chairmen to try to persuade the French Government to change its position.
3. The negotiations should be realistic, taking account of the views of all parties concerned and of the present international situation, so that concrete results could be achieved in all parts of the world within the framework of general disarmament.
4. The United States and Soviet disarmament plans provided that all militarily significant States must agree to disarm during the second stage. His delegation thought it desirable and essential, however, that they should begin to disarm in the very first stage.
5. Happily, the co-Chairmen were in agreement on the need to prevent the dissemination of nuclear weapons. His delegation attached great importance to that matter, and hoped that the Assembly would urge the Eighteen-Nation Committee to reach early agreement on it, so that effective measures could be taken to halt the dissemination of nuclear weapons.
6. The representative of the United Arab Republic had observed that the United States and the Soviet Union had approached the disarmament problem at Geneva from two different and, in fact, opposing points of view. In his statement at the 1266th meeting, the representative of the United Arab Republic had referred to the changes which the two sides had step by step made in their plans. It could thus be noted

with satisfaction that the United States and the Soviet Union had demonstrated at Geneva that they were willing to modify their positions in order to reach agreement. One problem with regard to which the plans should be modified was that of arms production. The two sides had responded favourably to the suggestions made to them in that connexion, and had amended their proposals to provide for a larger cut in the production of conventional armaments. However, provision should be made for halting the production of all armaments, including nuclear armaments, in the very first stage, and the two sides should try to reach agreement on that point.

7. Neither of the two major nuclear Powers had proposed measures to reduce or destroy weapons of mass destruction during the first stage. While it was true that the United States plan provided for the transfer of a considerable quantity of fissionable material to peaceful uses, it was questionable whether that would actually bring about a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction held by the two sides. Provision should be made for the destruction in the very first stage, subject to verification by the international disarmament organization, of a specified number of nuclear weapons. Similar action should be taken with regard to chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

8. The major statements made by the Soviet and United States representatives might give the impression that the positions of the two sides on control and verification had not drawn closer together at all. In fact, however, the Soviet Union and the United States were in agreement on certain points. They held that the international disarmament organization should verify all destruction of armaments and the conversion of arms factories, and that it should maintain continuing control thereafter in order to prevent the resumption of arms manufacturing. There had been long discussions at Geneva on the question of armaments retained by the various countries after the completion of agreed measures of destruction or conversion. The United States had suggested a zonal inspection system, but that proposal had been rejected by the Soviet Union. Thus, although the two sides had not been able to reach agreement on the problem of control they had clarified their positions and the situation appeared more encouraging than it had been at the outset. His country's delegation had suggested that the problem should be approached from the standpoint of clandestine activities rather than of remaining stockpiles. The two sides might, for example, agree that any activities not permitted under the disarmament plan should be subject to control by the international disarmament organization. Provision could also be made for indirect forms of verification, such as control over defence budgets and over the consumption of materials like steel used for the manufacture of armaments. All those matters could usefully be given further study at Geneva.

9. One of the factors that was blocking progress at Geneva was the two sides' mutual apprehensions. Negotiation would be easier on a good many issues if each side realized the genuineness of the other's apprehensions.

10. Although there were differences of opinion on the question of a peace force, the positions of the two sides were not very far apart. It was agreed, for example, that the United Nations must be strengthened for the purpose of keeping the peace while the process of disarmament was under way and, subsequently, in a disarmed world.

11. His delegation supported the United Arab Republic's proposal that the General Assembly should adopt a resolution urging the Eighteen-Nation Committee to speed the pace of its work so as to reach early agreement. The Assembly might even go further and criticize the Committee for not having made sufficiently rapid progress. The situation at Geneva was not hopeless, since the two sides had not taken a rigid position. At the forthcoming negotiations the Eighteen-Nation Committee should be able to work out an agreed plan so that positive proposals could be placed before the General Assembly at its next session.

12. Sir James PLIMSOLL (Australia) said that, since any disarmament plan would have to be accepted by the two main Powers concerned, and by most other countries as well, it would be unprofitable to attempt to force the Committee to choose between one particular plan and another. In working out a reconciliation, the great Powers would have to assess for themselves the effect of each proposal on their present and future relative strengths. But that was not to deny a role for the other countries of the world. They could, first, express their points of view and bring their influence to bear on the principles, and secondly, pursue policies with regard to their own armaments that would strengthen world security.

13. There had been some changes in the disarmament programmes, in particular with regard to relative priorities, to time schedules, and to the type of measures required. On the whole, those changes were to be welcomed, since they indicated the willingness of the great Powers to re-examine the assumptions of their policies. The ingenuity of the suggestions made by a number of representatives on the question of control and inspection was also welcome. The plain fact, however, was that no one knew quite how to accomplish disarmament. In that complicated question, where the very life of nations was involved, each of the great Powers, whatever its desires to achieve disarmament might be, had to weigh very carefully the implications of each step proposed. The actual methods of disarmament often posed difficult problems. For example, should the approach be one of "everything or nothing"? There was some logic in the idea of complete disarmament; partial measures of disarmament might reduce the likelihood of certain forms of warfare but not that of war itself. But in practical terms the world could not wait for agreement on everything before anything was done. In fact, the approval of all stages at once might be an impediment to the execution of a disarmament programme. Allowances had to be made for changes that would occur in the material factors affecting disarmament and in the mental attitude of the people of the world and of their Governments. Sometimes there was an air of unreality about disarmament debates because of a tendency to talk in terms of abstract principles, whereas in most cases material

considerations were involved, relating to the number and effectiveness of military bases, nuclear weapons delivery systems, troops, armaments and the like; and all countries, big or small, had to assess the effect of a particular disarmament plan on their relative military strengths.

14. No course could have any chance of adoption if it put one great Power at a disadvantage relative to the others, and that fact must be kept in mind by the great Powers and by those who were trying to influence the disarmament programmes. The relative strengths of the great Powers had to be balanced not as between isolated factors or even within categories, but by taking a total sum of factors on one side against a total sum of factors on the other.

15. Those considerations explained why the two sides, in their respective proposals, had produced in effect a series of "package deals". In the first stage those concerned were immediately confronted with the necessity of reaching a balance between large conventional armies on the one hand and nuclear weapons on the other. That meant that one could not proceed with nuclear disarmament alone in the first stage. There must also be some reductions in, and control of, conventional forces and weapons. The complete abolition of nuclear weapons in the first stage was possible only if the first stage itself was so expanded in time and in scope that it would alone make up the bulk of the disarmament process. Realistically speaking, however, the first stage involved some balancing of the various factors.

16. The Conference at Geneva had again raised certain problems, some of which had been debated even before the Second World War. For example, there was a choice to be made between quantitative and qualitative reductions. There was also the problem that some weapons, such as rockets and satellites, did not have exclusively military uses. Other problems included the inspection of retained stocks of weapons and fissile materials, the possibility of secret rearmament, the maintenance of peace in a disarmed world, what exactly were nuclear delivery vehicles, and the dissemination of nuclear weapons. All those points deserved close consideration.

17. As to the creation of nuclear-free zones, a General Assembly resolution might prove useful but would not in itself be the answer. Such zones could be set up only by the countries concerned, not by an Assembly resolution. It was impossible to impose such zones on the countries in the region. Moreover, it would probably be impossible to compel other countries to respect such zones if they were not themselves prepared to do so. One could not speak dogmatically about nuclear-free zones, since conditions were very different in different parts of the world. The specific situation in each region had to be considered from the standpoint of whether or not it had reason to fear a possible attack, either nuclear or conventional, from within or outside the region. Those observations were illustrated by the replies (DC/201 and Add.1-3) that had been given by Governments to General Assembly resolution 1664 (XVI).

18. Inspection and verification were a key element both in the execution of a programme of disarmament and in bringing about the climate of confidence needed to make such programmes possible. They were even more important for general disarmament than for the cessation of nuclear tests, which would not affect the relative strengths of countries, while a reduction of

armaments would do so. Furthermore, the problem was far more complex in the case of general disarmament. For example, there had to be assurances that one party did not retain hidden stocks; but that would be impossible if, as the Soviet Union proposed, verification would apply only to what was destroyed and not to what was retained. Nations should not be afraid of inspection and verification; on the contrary, it had to be made impossible for any country to maintain arms or plan military measures without the knowledge of everyone else, so that a climate of international confidence could be built up.

19. The first step was the ending of nuclear tests, which was much easier to achieve than other forms of disarmament. Then there must be some reduction and control of armaments themselves. His delegation considered the Western proposals on that subject to be fair and practical, but they were open to modification in the light of discussion and further exploration. Of course, a detailed discussion of the various proposals which had been presented was not the first Committee's task but that of the Eighteen-Nation Committee at Geneva. He wanted to say, however, that, as the Indian representative had suggested, all militarily significant States had to be taken into account in disarmament proposals. The problem was a very delicate one, but it would not be realistic to ignore it. The detailed pro-

grammes would have to be developed at Geneva through direct talks between the parties; but bilateral representations should also be made to one or the other or both of them by the various other countries of the world whose interests were involved.

20. The world was constantly changing, and he was convinced that countries would develop a growing sense of their common humanity. The disarmament question, therefore, should not be approached from too static a standpoint. Things that were not acceptable today might become so tomorrow, and that might be the case with the problem of inspection and verification. Political progress was equally important; it was necessary to work for an easing of tensions and to find positive solutions which would permit the elimination of war.

21. His delegation was prepared to support a draft resolution of the kind outlined by the representative of the United Arab Republic at the 1266th meeting. Such a resolution would allow the Eighteen-Nation Committee to take account of the discussions in the First Committee without creating unnecessary problems by seeking to divide the members of the First Committee for or against any proposals. He hoped that the Eighteen-Nation Committee would meet soon and conclude its work as quickly as possible.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.