

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

SIXTH SESSION

Official Records



FIRST COMMITTEE 450th

MEETING

Thursday, 22 November 1951, at 10.30 a.m.

Palais de Chaillot, Paris

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Chairman: Mr. Finn MOE (Norway).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Carlos Blanco (Cuba), the Vice-Chairman, presided.

Regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments (A/1943 and A/C.1/667) (*continued*)

[Item 66]*

International control of atomic energy : report of the Committee of Twelve (A/1922) (*continued*)

[Item 16]*

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

1. Mr. VON BALLUSECK (Netherlands) expressed his Government's general agreement with the aim of the draft resolution submitted by France, the United Kingdom and the United States (A/C.1/667), but reserved his right to explain its views as to the detailed proposals involved, which required further study. Disarmament was not an isolated problem, and to be successful it required a climate where the possibility of peaceful coexistence between the diverging groups would at least be honestly and earnestly explored. Nor was disarmament a simple problem. Armaments comprised so many elements of such a diversified nature that it was not sufficient to call for a reduction of all armaments by one-third and for prohibition of the atomic bomb. Thorough study of all the elements of armaments and an inventory of the quantities possessed by everyone would be necessary. What if all the atomic bombs were prohibited, while the possibility to make new ones secretly was left intact? Those who presented the matter so simply either misled themselves or wilfully misled others.

2. To proceed step by step, breaking the problem down into its component parts, as the joint draft resolution endeavoured to do, seemed to be the only realistic way to

approach the matter. Only in that way could it reasonably be expected that the burdens and potential dangers of the armaments race which was necessitated by reasons of national security could be removed. Those same reasons had led to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in conformity with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

3. Approaching the problem on each point of practical implementation might well reveal points of unexpected agreement on certain matters and could only contribute to the construction of good and effective machinery, paving the way for later and wider agreements to bridge the divisions which rendered immediate large-scale reduction of armaments an illusion. His Government believed that the joint proposal offered an honest basis for working out machinery for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of armed forces and armaments, including atomic weapons.

4. Referring to the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of Czechoslovakia, Mr. von Balluseck pointed out that paragraph 3 (a) of the operative part of the joint draft resolution made it clear that prohibition of the atomic bomb was a primary aim of the proposal. The atomic bomb must be prohibited. However, it formed part of a complicated whole and must be considered as such.

5. Attacking the whole problem in stages might well lead to a better and more realistic result than could the most attractive slogan without basis in reality.

6. ANDRAOS Bey (Egypt) said that he did not speak in support of either of the two trends of thought that divided the Assembly. Egypt, being a smaller nation which would probably be one of the first battlefields in the event of war, wished to make a constructive contribution to the discussions of the Committee. The joint proposal deserved the greatest consideration and he was convinced that the scheme was sincere and had been well thought out.

7. However, the statements of preceding speakers—for example, those of the representatives of the United

* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

Kingdom¹ and France (447th meeting) which were somewhat at odds with the attitudes of their Governments in the matter of the Suez Canal and the Moroccan affair—gave the impression that the form of peace intended was one which would be influenced in its working by those who were its promoters.

8. In that connexion, he wondered if it would not be possible in a later stage of the discussions to merge the USSR proposals (A/1962) and the three-Power proposal (A/C.1/667) which were in many respects similar, and proceed to a joint examination of the items which had been included in the Committee's agenda (A/C.1/666) under numbers 1, 2 and 5. What was wanted was not a *par britannica, americana, or sovietica*, but just peace.

9. It was quite natural that powers which had, or believed they had, superiority in the field of atomic energy should be reluctant to give it up. He recognized that United States acceptance of the principle that atomic weapons and conventional weapons should be considered together represented progress, and he paid tribute to the United States for that view. Nevertheless, it appeared from the three-Power proposal that the prohibition of atomic weapons and the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only was a remote goal not to be attained until the very last stages in the process of gradual disclosure and inventory.

10. The representative of Egypt considered that the atomic weapon should be immediately outlawed because of its indiscriminate effects, the impossibility of limiting it to military targets and the possibility of destroying civilian population. He recalled that the dum-dum bullets and asphyxiating gases had been forbidden by international law and the prohibition had been respected. As in the case of those forbidden weapons, it was unlikely that atomic bombs would be used in view of the probability of retaliation. If disarmament must proceed in several stages, therefore, he urged the Committee to consider the question of outlawing the atomic bomb, and suggested that perhaps a concrete proposal to that effect might be sent to the Sixth Committee. He would support such a proposal if any member of the Committee regarded the idea favourably.

11. Andraos Bey was not convinced that the process of gradual disclosure and inspection would not prove to be a constant source of friction, though of course the principle itself, which was the only way to ensure practical control, must be accepted.

12. Referring to the position of blocs in relation to disarmament, he observed that the so-called Middle East Command which Egypt had been invited to enter as a

substitute for the deceased Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 was in his view not within the framework of the Charter. He considered there were two models of regional arrangement which came within the definition of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, the one resulting from the Agreement of Chapultepec and the Arab League.

13. In conclusion, Andraos Bey stated that Egypt, whose record of contribution to peace and civilization was undeniable, was ready to co-operate within the framework of the Charter in any plan of disarmament. It would prefer that any such plan should not be monopolized by one of the two gigantic blocs that seemed to divide the world. Egypt would use its various assets and natural position as an essential element of peace and security in the Middle East to co-operate with all peace-loving nations.

14. Baron DE GRUBEN (Belgium) pointed out that disarmament was but one of the methods for ensuring peace which, if established by other methods, would make national armament superfluous. It had been recognized for some time, however, that disarmament would contribute to a decrease in international tension which would assist the practical solution of political problems. The procedure envisaged in the three-Power draft resolution included both political and technical elements. On the one hand, it would require the adhesion of all States with military resources of importance and, since it impinged on the sovereignty of those States, their agreement to the proposed measures was necessary. On the other hand, technical questions such as the prohibition of some weapons and the limitation of others, and verification and control were also covered by the joint proposal. His delegation considered that the draft resolution constituted a basis and framework for a discussion of disarmament, and therefore supported it.

15. Baron de Gruben stressed the importance of the clarifications and assurances provided by the sponsors of the three-Power draft resolution, and in particular those relating to the prohibition of atomic weapons and to the determination of the procedure governing the transition from one stage or step to another. Quoting point 7 in the USSR draft resolution (A/1962), he observed that its similarity to the joint proposal, though it was summary in character, was such as to make it strange that its author should be hostile to the latter. The joint proposal contained clarifications which constituted the indispensable minimum for a definition of the task. Attempts to impugn the motives and intentions of those submitting it could arise only from incurable suspicion. If the most reasonable and conciliatory proposals should finally be rejected, at least no one would be deceived as to who was responsible for the resulting state of affairs.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 339th meeting.