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Chairman : Mr. Finn MOE (Norway).

Measures to combat the threat of a new world war and to strengthen peace and friendship among the nations (A/1944, A/1947, A/C.1/698 and A/C.1/699) (continued)

[Item 67]*

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. WILSON (New Zealand) thought that everything useful that could be said on the subject of the Soviet Union draft resolution (A/C.1/698) had probably been said. His remarks would therefore refer less to the actual text of the draft resolution than to the subject with which it dealt.

2. Certainly, no question concerned the United Nations more than the question of the measures needed to combat the threat of a new war, but there might be measures other than those cited in the draft resolution before the Committee.

3. The delegation of New Zealand listed the following six measures :

(1) The avoidance of aggressive ventures such as that in Korea and the discouragement of any who might be meditating similar action at the present time ;

(2) The cessation of intimidation, whether direct or indirect, as an instrument of national policy. Despite its representatives' statements, the Soviet Union was largely responsible for the present general lack of confidence. It was true that the free Press of the western countries had been guilty of irresponsible utterances, for which the governments were not to blame. The policy of the western Powers, however, showed that they intended to defend themselves, as was their right, but no country was afraid of losing its independence by the action of the western Powers, whereas a certain eastern Power inspired general apprehension. The Canadian representative, in his speech at the previous meeting, had made it clear that there did exist a fear of the tyrannical use of force ;

(3) A relaxation of totalitarian secrecy was a necessary condition of the growth of confidence between nations ;

(4) The abandonment of historical fictions upon which international confidence could not be based. Two such myths had been sedulously cultivated during the current session : that the South Koreans, or the Americans—or both—had been the authors of the aggression of 25 June

1950 ; that before the Second World War the western Powers had lined up with Hitler Germany against the Soviet Union ;

(5) The establishment by the Security Council and, if necessary, by the General Assembly, of an effective collective security system ;

(6) A return on the part of the United Nations to the spirit of tolerance professed in the preamble to the Charter. At San Francisco such tolerance had existed despite fundamentally divergent views. Violations of the Charter must of course, not be tolerated ; but in the Charter Members had expressed their determination to practise tolerance towards one another.

4. The New Zealand delegation believed that a reminder of that determination properly belonged to the discussion of the item placed on the agenda by the USSR delegation.

5. Mr. BEBLER (Yugoslavia) observed that among the problems referred to in the USSR draft resolution some had already been examined by the First Committee, others had merely been adjourned, and yet others had been dealt with in proposals previously submitted by the USSR delegation and rejected during earlier sessions of the General Assembly. The fact that these questions had been raised once more confirmed the impression that the chief object of the Soviet Union delegation was propaganda.

6. Paragraph 1 of the USSR draft resolution stated that participation in the North Atlantic Treaty was incompatible with membership in the United Nations. Yugoslavia belonged neither to the North Atlantic Treaty nor to any other regional organization. Nevertheless, for nearly four years it had been subjected to aggressive pressure from a " bloc " which was not mentioned in the draft resolution.

7. Paragraph 2 of the USSR draft resolution reopened the question of Korea. The Committee had decided to postpone the discussion of that question. The USSR, in its draft resolution, proposed the 38th parallel as an armistice line. The Yugoslav representative had already made that proposal to the Security Council on 25 and 27 June 1950, but at that time the Government of the USSR had turned a deaf ear, and had not envisaged an " end of hostilities " until 1 October 1950, when the North Korean troops had occupied almost the whole of South Korea.

8. Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution dealt with the prohibition of atomic weapons and the establishment of strict international control. There again, the question was whether those proposals contained anything new. In the

* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

opinion of the Yugoslav delegation the present text was remarkably like the former proposals. It would therefore agree to submit the question to the Disarmament Commission.

9. With regard to the new proposal that the great Powers should reduce their armaments and armed forces by one-third, that subject had already been discussed at length. Its only effect would be to perpetuate the present superiority of the Soviet Union in the field of conventional armaments.

10. The draft resolution concluded by reviving the old proposal for a pact between the five great Powers. It was hardly necessary to recall that such a pact would be in flagrant contradiction with the democratic principles of the Charter and would be a step backward on the path towards international understanding. Recent history showed that a peace based only on the great Powers was extremely precarious.

11. The Yugoslav delegation would vote against the USSR draft resolution as a whole. However, for the reasons mentioned, it would abstain in the vote on the paragraph relating to the control of atomic energy and the prohibition of the atomic bomb, and also on that relating to Korea.

12. It would vote for the joint draft resolution submitted by the delegations of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

13. Mr. GROSS (United States of America) said that his delegation had carefully studied the USSR draft resolution which constituted much less of an advance than had been thought.

14. The United States of America would vote against paragraph 1 which condemned self-defence as a violation of the Charter. The North Atlantic Treaty was purely defensive. Its aim was to prevent a third world war. The Government of the Soviet Union could rest assured, if peace was in fact its objective, that it had nothing to fear from such an organization. The General Assembly had already taken a stand on that matter in the eighth paragraph of the preamble to the draft resolution which it adopted at its 359th plenary meeting (A/L.26). The North Atlantic Treaty was in conformity with the terms of the Charter. Moreover, the signatories of that treaty were seeking, under paragraph 6 of the operative part of the aforementioned resolution, to obtain within the regional organizations to which they belong all the support possible for collective measures under the United Nations. That paragraph refuted the USSR argument that participation in regional agreements of that kind was incompatible with membership in the United Nations.

15. The Soviet Union went on to request the General Assembly to condemn the establishment of military bases on foreign territory. All the agreements negotiated by the United States were in conformity with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter. The negotiations for those agreements had been carried on freely between the States concerned.

16. It had been alleged that the United States wished to exercise pressure abroad and was seeking "cannon-fodder" outside its own territory. Such an allegation was absurd and the arguments put forward in support of it had merely proved its absurdity. The representative of the Soviet Union had complained of the United States expenditure in defence of its own economy. The Byelorussian representative had complained at the same time that American troops were "pouring into Europe". It was, in fact, a question of the execution of mutual defence agreements in which the United States expected from its partners an equivalent contribution.

17. Paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was merely another attempt to throw into confusion the armistice negotiations taking place in Korea. If in June 1950 the USSR had adopted the policy it was now putting forward in its draft resolution, the conflict in Korea would never have arisen. Armistice negotiations were now under way and there were only a few questions outstanding which could be dealt with speedily. The United Nations Command in Korea was continuing its efforts. However, nothing that was said in the First Committee would be likely to encourage the conclusion of an agreement on the conditions for a military armistice. In fact, progress had slowed down since the representative of the Soviet Union began speaking on this subject at the present session. Once the armistice had been concluded, the First Committee would be able to concern itself with the political measures necessary to guarantee the establishment of a unified, independent and democratic régime in Korea and the economic measures necessary to repair the devastation wrought by aggression.

18. If despite everything the representative of the Soviet Union insisted on a decision on that paragraph—contrary to the decision adopted the week before—the United States delegation hoped that the First Committee would reject it.

19. The proposals contained in paragraphs 3 and 7 of the draft resolution amounted to re-introducing the amendments submitted by the USSR (A/C.1/668/Rev.2) to the three-Power draft resolution on disarmament (A/C.1/667/Rev.1), amendments which had been rejected. That was tantamount to proposing the reconsideration of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. In view of the obvious importance of the question at stake, the United States delegation did not wish to invoke juridical arguments. Nevertheless, it would appear impractical and unwise to reopen a discussion which had lasted five weeks. The terms of reference of the Disarmament Commission were wide enough to allow it to study the Soviet Union's proposal, or any other similar proposal which might be made at the current session of the General Assembly. It was empowered to do so by paragraph 3 (c) of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly (A/L.25). The USSR would sit on that Commission and everyone would be glad of any progress, no matter how slight, which would make it possible to break the deadlock which subsisted in the highly important field of disarmament.

20. Several delegations had pointed out that there was some ambiguity regarding the time which was to elapse between the prohibition of the weapon and the setting up of a system of control. The text proposed was far from clear. If the Soviet Union really meant the two processes to be simultaneous, it was a step forward from its previous position. However, it could hardly be said that such a step would be decisive, since in 1948 a Soviet proposal for the simultaneous prohibition of atomic weapons and the establishment of control had been rejected by the General Assembly as advocating an insufficient and inadequate system.

21. Moreover, the possible advance in the Soviet Union position, as brought out by the use, in paragraph 6 of the resolution, of the words "the international control organ shall have the right to conduct inspection on a continuing basis" was apparently wiped out by the following phrase, which made it clear that the control organ would not be entitled to interfere in the domestic affairs of States. It was not said who was to determine when such inspection constituted interference. Moreover, the Atomic Energy Commission had shown, in its conclusions, that even a system of continuing inspection, not subject to the reservations formulated in the draft resolution, was insufficient to

prevent fissionable materials from being diverted for secret and illegal purposes.

22. Apart from those problems which would have to be studied by the Disarmament Commission, the Soviet Union draft resolution continued to advocate a reduction by one-third of the armaments and armed forces of the permanent members of the Security Council. The General Assembly had often given its opinion on that point—that the only effect of such proposals would be to increase the disequilibrium of forces.

23. With regard to the Soviet Union proposal that within a month States should supply complete information on the state of their armaments and armed forces, the General Assembly had declared that the only possible procedure would be for the Disarmament Commission to devise a system for the gradual disclosure of information subject to the control of international inspectors. Such an inspection force could not begin to operate within a month.

24. In point of fact, it was for the Disarmament Commission to pursue the study of those proposals, which would then be examined by the Government of the United States in the spirit of the statements made by Mr. Acheson in the First Committee at its 447th meeting.

25. However, some stress should be laid on one factor of considerable political significance. The very fact that the delegation of the Soviet Union was now submitting what it called new proposals showed the power of world public opinion. The proposals submitted by the delegation of the Soviet Union might reflect that delegation's decision henceforward to take into account the wishes of the world, which longed to see the end of dialectics and the beginning of genuine planning for disarmament.

26. By referring the proposals on the agenda of the First Committee to the Disarmament Commission the Committee would not of course be merely shelving them. Any allegation to that effect would bear no relation to the facts or to logic.

27. Paragraph 8 of the draft resolution repeated the former proposal for a peace pact among the five great Powers. Most representatives already felt, as Mr. Acheson had said, that the United Nations meant not a five-Power pact but a sixty-Power pact. What the world needed was not new peace pacts but respect for agreements already concluded, and above all for the Charter of the United Nations.

28. The Government of the United States would therefore vote against paragraph 8 of the Soviet Union's draft resolution.

29. Mr. COSTA DU RELS (Bolivia) had carefully studied the Soviet Union draft resolution which was linked to three conditions of a political character: the abrogation of the North Atlantic Treaty, an armistice in Korea and the withdrawal of troops from Korea.

30. Since the North Atlantic Treaty was a defensive pact there was no reason to force the signatories to abrogate it. The conclusion of an armistice in Korea depended entirely on the Soviet Union which could settle the matter with one word. The withdrawal of troops was a purely military matter.

31. One interesting point in the USSR proposal was its acceptance of simultaneous prohibition of the atomic bomb and the establishment of international control. Unfortunately, the constructive side of such a proposal was immediately distorted by political or propaganda considerations.

32. Nevertheless, the attempt should receive careful study. The meaning of what the text in paragraph 6 of the draft resolution called "inspection on a continuing basis"

must be made clear, since the meaning of the proposal was restricted by invoking the principle of sovereignty. Inspection would seem to imply some abandonment, however slight, of national sovereignty. In the case in point, there would have to be inspection not only in factories and laboratories but also in the mines from which uranium was extracted. Such risks of friction must be foreseen.

33. Moreover, the report of the control organ which would be created by the Disarmament Commission, which was itself under the authority of the Security Council, would be submitted to the latter. He wondered what the position would be if, owing to a veto by some Power, the report was not accepted by the Security Council. The Bolivian delegation suggested, in case of a deadlock, that the control organ's report should be transmitted to the General Assembly under the security measures adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 377 (V).

34. In conclusion, the representative of Bolivia proposed an amendment (A/C.1/700) to the draft resolution submitted by France, the United States and the United Kingdom, calling for the addition of a final paragraph to the draft resolution to read as follows:

"Decides also to transmit to the Disarmament Commission for its information the records of the meetings of the First Committee at which this item was discussed."

35. Mr. BATLLE BERRES (Uruguay) observed that all States were bent on taking a stand on the agenda items relating to the strengthening of peace and measures to avert the threat of war, more especially the small Powers which, because of their limited military potential, could not constitute a threat to peace. Uruguay had on many occasions explained its policy, which was to work without prejudice for the freedom of peoples and the strengthening of peace.

36. Some delegations would like to use the rostrum of this Committee for propaganda purposes. The Soviet Union, finding it impossible to bring its views into line with those of the majority, often sought to address itself to world public opinion. The fallacious arguments and questionable activities of the USSR, which claimed to be the sole champion of peace, must be refuted. Public opinion could not be disregarded. The Soviet Union was trying to brand the North Atlantic Treaty as an "aggressive bloc". How then was one to regard the conquest and absorption of the Baltic States, Romania and Bulgaria? It should be remembered that the basic tenet of the Leninist creed was permanent revolution, the element of struggle favourable to the advance of communism. Obviously, it would always be hard to reach agreement in the Committee on whether the act of absorbing the Balkan countries was peaceful and whether, on the other hand, the North Atlantic Treaty was an instrument of aggression. That was where public opinion, acting as judge of the United Nations, intervened. Those who believed communist absorption to be peaceful and the uniting of free and peace-loving countries aggressive would eventually form a homogeneous, communist, corporate body. Those holding the contrary view that absorption was the worst form of imperialism would approve the action of countries which united freely in self-defence against aggression.

37. The First Committee had discussed at length the prohibition of the atomic weapon and the establishment of international control, so that there was no room left for any doubt as to what was meant. The Soviet bloc had held up as an impediment the principle of the sovereignty of peoples, but if such an attitude were taken up by some governments there would no longer be any guarantee for the hopes placed in the control organ which was envisaged. Furthermore, control implied free and accurate infor-

mation: freedom of movement for those concerned, and freedom of the press to disseminate the information obtained. It was difficult to imagine that a country where freedom of the press and of speech were unknown could be effectively subjected to control. In fact, everybody knew that the Soviet Union would refuse to accept general control.

38. It should be recognized that the major difficulties preventing the strengthening of peace arose out of the different meaning, in the Soviet countries and in the democratic countries, of the terms used. That was the underlying cause of the tragedy of mutual misunderstanding.

39. The Uruguayan delegation would vote against the USSR draft resolution.

40. Mr. H.S. MALIK (India) said there was not a single country which was not concerned at the differences between the great Powers. It was the fear that that tension would lead to a world war that had made the nations accept the huge burden which the maintenance of large armed forces entailed. He stressed the developments that would be possible, especially for the benefit of the less favoured section of humanity, if those resources could be applied for peaceful purposes.

41. The setting up by the General Assembly of the Disarmament Commission was a step of which the United Nations could be proud. The Indian delegation saw a glimmer of hope in that, on the one hand the USSR delegation had proposed the simultaneous prohibition of atomic weapons and the institution of an international control, and that, on the other, the three great western Powers had proposed

that paragraphs 3-7 of the USSR draft resolution should be referred to the new Disarmament Commission. Discussion in that body ought to enable the great Powers to seek a compromise on those important and delicate questions.

42. The statements made in the current discussion, particularly those of the United Kingdom, French and United States representatives, had given the Indian delegation hope that a favourable atmosphere could be created. It would obviously be too much to hope that the existing suspicion could be dispelled as by the wave of a magic wand, but there were grounds for hope that the proposals now before the Committee would be a first step forward. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that no real improvement would be possible as long as the great Powers did not reach an agreement. In the meantime, the remaining States must try to contribute to the greatest possible widening of the field of agreement.

43. The Indian delegation had seriously considered the two draft resolutions before the Committee. It believed that its vote, either for or against the proposals, would tend rather to enlarge the area of disagreement between the great Powers. It would, therefore, abstain.

44. Nevertheless, it hoped that, if the Soviet Union draft resolution should be referred to the Disarmament Commission, the latter, sitting in private, would find a basis on which to frame a draft convention, which could be approved by an international conference and, in due course, ratified by the great Powers.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.