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AGENDA ITEMS 27, 28, 29, 94 AND 96

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1. The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform the members of the Committee that the Netherlands has become a co-sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/L.444 and Add.1 and 2, bringing the number of co-sponsors of that draft resolution to fourteen.

2. Mr. LANGE (Norway): In the general debate on 9 October 1968 [*1688th plenary meeting, para. 143*] the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lyng, stated that the prevention of a further proliferation of nuclear weapons and the cessation of the nuclear arms race were prerequisites to a lasting peace. The Norwegian Government has spared no effort in preparing for an early ratification of the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and I am happy to be able to inform the Committee that the Norwegian Government has now recommended to Parliament a speedy ratification of the treaty and that consequently Norway's ratification can be expected in the near future. In this connexion, I should like to express the sincere hope of my Government that all Members of the United Nations and non-Members alike give top priority to this matter in order that this vital treaty may enter into force at the earliest possible date.

3. Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [*General Assembly resolution 1373 (XXII), annex*] reads as follows:

"Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

4. The pledge implied in that article gave rise to high hopes for progress in the field of disarmament, and those hopes were strengthened by the achievements of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament during its session last summer. Those hopes for a more favourable climate in the field of arms control and disarmament suffered a grave set-back as a result of recent events in Europe. There is no other way open to us, however, but to renew our efforts to work out solutions to these grave and pressing problems.

5. My delegation welcomes the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.¹ We are especially happy that the Conference was able to agree upon an agenda for its future work.² The fact that that agenda accords top priority to the field of nuclear disarmament is a clear indication of the significance of the matter. Regardless of the prevailing international political climate and the present differences between the super-Powers, it is my delegation's earnest hope that serious talks between them on the vital problems of limitation of offensive strategic nuclear weapon delivery systems and systems of defence against ballistic missiles could be started in the not-too-distant future.

¹ See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1967 and 1968*, document DC/231.

² *Ibid.*, para. 17.

6. Item 2 on the agenda adopted by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament deals with biological and chemical means of warfare. First of all, I should like to stress that the Norwegian Government considers the questions raised by this item to be of paramount importance. Some States maintain that the Geneva Protocol of 1925³ is an entirely satisfactory instrument for dealing with the question of chemical and microbiological warfare, while other States are of the opinion that the Geneva Protocol should be supplemented.

7. I associate myself with the view expressed by the Swedish representative, Mrs. Myrdal, in the 391st meeting of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament⁴ that debates about the merits or demerits of various existing interpretations of the words "bacteriological", "biological", and "microbiological" tend to become sterile. Therefore it might be useful that some joint collective statement be made in the General Assembly or elsewhere, a statement that would enable States to register adherence to a ban on all B and C means of warfare, comprehensively interpreted. The Norwegian delegation warmly supports the proposal made by several States that the Secretary-General be asked to prepare a report on the nature and effects of B and C means of warfare. Last year's report by the Secretary-General on the effects of nuclear weapons⁵ proved of considerable value.

8. With a view to reserving the ocean floor and the sea-bed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction exclusively for peaceful purposes, the Government of Norway strongly favours the adoption of measures preventing these areas from being used for strategic military purposes. It is of paramount importance for the maintenance of world peace that these areas do not become the arena of an arms race. The Norwegian Government regards it as a *sine qua non* condition for the effective and peaceful exploitation in the interest of all mankind of the natural resources of the ocean floor and sea-bed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction that these areas be not used for military purposes.

9. My Government attaches great importance to renewed efforts by the principal nuclear Powers to reach agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty. With a view to arriving at an effective halt of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and also to preventing a further escalation of the nuclear arms race, high priority should be given to endeavours to stop all testing of new nuclear devices for military purposes.

10. One of the remaining obstacles to extending the provisions of the Moscow partial test ban Treaty of 1963⁶ to underground tests is the disagreement between the United States and the Soviet Union as to what would

constitute an adequate verification system for the comprehensive treaty.

11. In that respect the report of the Stockholm International Institute for Peace and Conflict Research⁷ mentioned in *The New York Times* on Sunday, 17 November 1968 and referred to by Mrs. Myrdal in her intervention in this debate on Monday 18 November [1609th meeting, para. 91] gives cause for optimism. According to the report it is now possible to distinguish between the seismic signals generated by earthquakes and those generated by large and medium-sized underground explosions. The ability more positively to identify explosions should improve the prospects of solving the problems of verification and thereby enable the parties to reach agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty—a treaty which is vital for making progress in the field of disarmament.

12. One achievement of the recent Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States which has been especially welcomed by the Norwegian Government is the strengthening of the position of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the field of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. It is the view of the Norwegian Government that IAEA should be strengthened further and reorganized in such a way that it could better discharge its new responsibility when the non-proliferation treaty enters into force.

13. The main responsibility of IAEA, however, is the promotion of the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It would seem to my Government, therefore, that there is no actual need for setting up a new committee to deal with the activities of United Nations agencies in this field. On the contrary, there would seem to be a serious risk of bogging down in interminable discussions were we to encourage a proliferation of committees with mandates infringing upon the responsibilities of existing agencies of our Organization.

14. I shall not here deal separately with all the resolutions passed by the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States. I should like to mention, however, that Norway at that Conference co-sponsored resolution D [see A/7277 and Corr.1, para. 17(III)], urging "the Governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to enter at an early date into bilateral discussions on the limitation of offensive strategic nuclear-weapons delivery systems and systems of defence against ballistic missiles". It is the fervent hope of my Government that these talks will begin as soon as possible, in order to avoid the imminent danger of a renewal of the strategic nuclear arms race and its escalation to new levels which might become uncontrollable.

15. While we are all aware that the major Powers bear a special responsibility in the field of nuclear armaments, there is, I am sure, general agreement that the smaller countries may also contribute effectively to a lessening of world tensions. In this regard it would be a real achievement if some form of international agreement could be reached with a view to halting or at least reducing the flow of conventional arms to areas of conflict. In his intervention in the general debate on 8 October [1685th plenary

³ Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, done at Geneva on 17 June 1925 (League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XCIV, 1929, No. 2138).

⁴ See ENDC/PV.391 (mimeographed), para. 20.

⁵ Effects of the possible use of nuclear weapons and the security and economic implications for States of the acquisition and further development of these weapons (United Nations publication, Sales No.: E.68.IX.1.).

⁶ Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 480 (1963), No. 6964).

⁷ See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1967 and 1968*, document DC/231, annex I, sect. 6.

meeting, paras. 144 and 145], Mr. Hartling, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, announced the intention of the Danish delegation to introduce a draft resolution to that effect. The Norwegian Government shares the view that such a limited step would serve the cause of peace.

16. The problem of disarmament is of the greatest importance to all nations, large and small, to non-nuclear as well as nuclear Powers. To reach our ultimate goal, general and complete disarmament, we shall have to proceed step by step, searching for openings wherever we can find them. No efforts must be spared and no time lost in attempting to curb the destructive power of nuclear weapons. Our appeal goes to the major Powers to act before it is too late and to exert every effort to reach agreement on halting the nuclear arms race, which, if allowed to proceed to new levels, will create a grave threat to the security of all States, and indeed to the very survival of mankind.

17. Mr. de LAIGLESIA (Spain) (*translated from Spanish*): As has been the practice since General Assembly resolution 1722 (XVI) was adopted, when we take up the questions of general and complete disarmament, the urgent need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests, and the elimination of foreign military bases in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, we examine the report on these items prepared by the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

18. On this occasion, the report embodies the work done by that organ between 16 July and 28 August of this year. During that period, the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament held fourteen official plenary meetings and one informal meeting, and the main outcome of its work was the drafting of a provisional agenda for its next meeting, which will no doubt open in the first few months of 1969. It was likewise agreed to grant priority to the consideration of new measures related to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to place before the General Assembly a proposal for the appointment of a group of experts to study the effects of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological weapons. Side by side with this, several delegations belonging to the Eighteen-Nation Committee have made important suggestions which have not been studied exhaustively as yet.

19. Thus there is relatively little to show for the work done at Geneva during the last session, a situation no doubt decisively affected by the fact that during the previous sessions the Committee was totally absorbed in the preparation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Hence it is not easy to discuss the report at length, since as it says in paragraph 19:

"Because of the comparative shortness of this session, the Committee reports that it has not been able to give comprehensive consideration to the matters before it."

20. Thus, bearing in mind the procedure followed under the terms of resolution 1722 (XVI), let us hope that at the twenty-fourth session in the autumn of 1969 the General Assembly will again consider the items dealing with disarmament and determine whether or not there has been any progress in that direction. Until then, the countries which are not members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament will have to be content with being mere

onlookers in negotiations of extraordinary importance to all Member States.

21. The fact is that until a few years ago disarmament problems seemed to be of direct concern to only a handful of countries which because of their situation or their international responsibilities were bound up very closely with the arms race. Today, on the other hand, all the members of the international community, without exception, are being asked to undertake commitments which may decisively affect their security and their development in the more or less near future. Hence the importance for our countries of close contact with the organs negotiating international legal instruments designed to stabilize peace in the world is increasing every day, so that it seems palpably unsatisfactory that the great majority of Member States should have the opportunity of dealing with disarmament questions only once a year, when the General Assembly comes to examine the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

22. The Spanish delegation has expressed its concern about this on a number of occasions, although that must not be taken as implying disagreement with the procedure for dealing with these questions as laid down in resolution 1722 (XVI). We regard the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament as an organ perfectly well equipped to negotiate with the two super-Powers on the problems of disarmament. We likewise consider that its structure is fully representative and that the work done by its members is highly effective considering the complexity of the matters with which it has to deal. Hence, in our view there is no reason whatever, for the time being, to make changes in either its composition or its working methods. One thing, however, I must emphasize once again, and that is the need to establish machinery enabling all countries, without exception, to be linked more closely to the negotiations going on at Geneva.

23. Compliance with that desire was in a sense the purpose of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States held from 29 August to 28 September 1968. Its Final Document [A/7277] is now before us for consideration. The Spanish delegation supported the idea of convening the Conference by voting in favour of resolution 2153 B (XX), and took an active part in its organization as a member of the Preparatory Committee. The results achieved by the Conference are to be seen in the declaration issued and in the fourteen resolutions adopted.

24. I shall not go deeply into the work done at Geneva by the ninety-six countries that participated in the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States, since on 18 November at the 1610th meeting of the First Committee the representative of Pakistan, Mr. Shahi, gave a masterly and highly detailed account of everything that was done at the Conference. What I do feel I must point out is that the Conference was a most valuable contribution to the efforts being made to move forward in the disarmament sphere. We therefore believe it desirable not to interrupt the work it has accomplished, but in accordance with the terms of resolution N of the Conference, to continue the work undertaken.

25. In this connexion, the Spanish delegation regards as extremely interesting the move by a group of delegations

backing the proposal to set up a committee to supervise the implementation of all the resolutions of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States by the various organs concerned, including the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament itself, the idea being that the new organ could maintain close contact with that Committee with a view to transmitting to it regularly the views of the countries not members of it but directly interested in its work. In this way, without the need to wait until the General Assembly meets and the First Committee examines the report of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, closer contact could be established between the Eighteen-Nation Committee and any Member States which feel themselves directly affected by the questions being dealt with at Geneva.

26. Many delegations have urged the necessity for speeding up the work connected with disarmament, but in practice, these representations have not elicited sufficient response from the countries able to move in that direction. In the view of the Spanish delegation, the sluggish pace of the disarmament negotiations is due in part to the procedure laid down in resolution 1722 (XVI), which might profitably be brought up to date, so as to stimulate a more open dialogue between the Geneva group and the rest of the countries that would be properly represented in the proposed committee, in the sense that in the course of the sessions of the former, joint meetings of both bodies would be held so that countries not members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament could also make suggestions and comments without having to wait for the sessions of the General Assembly.

27. Apart from these tasks in relation to disarmament, the committee to supervise the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States might undertake to study and promote international co-operation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, a topic of immense importance for national development. The problem of guaranteeing security might likewise be examined by the proposed committee with a view to achieving universal acceptability of a system leading to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

28. My delegation does not feel that the creation of a co-ordinating body such as that proposed would duplicate the work of existing bodies. After all, this new committee could not interfere in the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose purpose is essentially technical. Nor would any relationship that emerged with the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament create problems, since all it would do would be to establish greater co-ordination and closer contact between the Eighteen-Nation Committee and those States Members of the United Nations which regard it as unsatisfactory that they are unable to be associated in any way with disarmament questions except once a year.

29. Thus, just as we have never felt that the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States could interfere with the functions of the General Assembly—and the facts have borne out that contention—we likewise do not consider that a special committee to supervise the implementation of the resolutions adopted at Geneva, co-ordinating the work of all the bodies affected by those resolutions, could con-

stitute a disturbing element likely to obstruct the achievement of the objectives we all desire.

30. Everyone realizes that progress in the field of disarmament hinges basically on the will of the super-Powers; but we all know too how closely the outcome of their negotiations affect us and how much the commitments mutually arrived at by those Powers can influence our future. That is why we feel constrained to urge the necessity for finding ways and means of associating all the countries more closely with the negotiations aimed at achieving disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear power, a matter intimately bound up with the more important aspects of disarmament.

31. The Spanish delegation considers that while some progress has been made in the field of disarmament over the past few years, it is essential to bring home to everyone the conviction that the world in which we live is undergoing a profound transformation that makes it imperative if we wish to continue to make progress, to adapt our approach to an entirely new situation. We feel that the machinery at our disposal for setting up systems capable of ensuring the peace of the world is of genuine effectiveness, but that its functioning has to be adapted from time to time to cope with circumstances which are no longer the same as they were when the machinery was established.

32. Mr. ASANTE (Ghana): It was salutary to observe that representatives were reluctant to speak on the important question of disarmament. On such an important subject, most delegations felt that it was rash to rush into words that have very little meaning left in them. Moreover, it appears that, however hard we exercise our jaws here, nothing much happens until the major Powers decide, in their own good time, to act. The breakthrough achieved at the resumed twenty-second session of the General Assembly in the adoption of a resolution commending the non-proliferation treaty [*resolution 2373 (XXII) and Annex*] was due to an understanding between the super-Powers. My delegation deeply appreciates the good work done by the seventeen participants in the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, but we are sure many of the participants will agree that the results they have achieved so far are incommensurate with the great efforts they have put into the task of securing agreement on disarmament. It is therefore natural for delegations of small countries like Ghana to ask the super-Powers, which set the pace in armaments: what next? Do you seriously want to tackle a part of the difficult and complicated problem of disarmament, or do you believe that if any meaningful agreement can be put off for some time, you may acquire a substantial advantage over the other party?

33. Whatever the reason, if one of the super-Powers is not ready for concrete disarmament measures, then, whether we reactivate the Disarmament Commission or give more guidelines to the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee, or set up a committee to co-ordinate the resolutions adopted by the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States, nothing much will happen. There would, therefore not be much for my delegation to say but for the fact that, should any party be mad enough to unleash a nuclear war, the ensuing devastating effects would not be confined to the belligerent parties. Moreover, we have made our contribu-

tion in agreeing not to acquire nuclear weapons. We therefore have a right to request the nuclear Powers to make substantial concessions for world peace.

34. Therefore, despite our appreciation of the hard realities, my delegation would like to add its voice to those of the other delegations of small countries which call for a halt to the mad march towards senseless destruction. We affirm that the huge wastage of human and material resources while millions starve—the cruel tragedy, of which we are helpless spectators—is not inevitable. It may not be in our nature to learn from the past, but we should not allow the tortuous reasoning of defence experts, politicians and diplomats to weaken our instinct for self-preservation.

35. At the twenty-second session [*1565th plenary meeting, para. 74*], the leader of my delegation welcomed the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and stated that it should serve as an example to other regions of the world. Ghana has always subscribed to the idea of the denuclearization of the African continent. It is the view of my delegation that the prohibition of nuclear weapons in other sub-continent or continents not inhabited by nuclear-weapon States should be made easier by the non-proliferation treaty. Those of us who have no nuclear weapons should make it quite clear that if the nuclear Powers want to play with nuclear weapons, they should do so on their own territory and suffer the maximum consequences.

36. Ghana has signed the non-proliferation treaty, despite its imperfections, in the genuine belief that, as was stated by the leader of my delegation, Mr. Anin, Commissioner for External Affairs, in the General Assembly on 8 October 1968, “such a Treaty could open the way towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament”. [*1685th plenary meeting, para. 124.*]

37. We cannot achieve complete disarmament at one go. My delegation therefore agrees with the statement by the United Kingdom Secretary of State that “we have to seize hold, one after another, of the steps to disarmament that can practically be taken now.” [*1693rd plenary meeting, para. 93.*] But if the non-proliferation treaty is a practical step, it is also a measure which ceases to be convincing unless it is followed immediately by certain other practical steps. Therefore, while we join in the appeal to those who have not signed or ratified the treaty to do so, we would urge the nuclear Powers and especially the super-Powers to take the necessary steps which would make the non-proliferation treaty convincing and make it easy for those who have not signed to change their minds. These necessary steps fall into two categories, namely:

(a) Effective assurances to satisfy all non-nuclear Powers and sympathetic consideration of the results of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States;

(b) Convincing efforts to reach understanding leading to concrete agreements in the field of general and complete disarmament.

38. The results of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States are well known and my delegation will not take the time of the Committee to refer to this subject at this stage. We will take the floor if necessary when concrete

direct resolutions on the decisions and conclusions of the Conference are being discussed.

39. It is necessary to stress now, however, the importance my delegation attaches to the results of the Conference. Despite the imperfections in the formulation of our beliefs and wishes, the recommendations and resolutions reveal the yearnings of our hearts and my delegation will strive for effective follow-up action organized in such a way—as was put succinctly by my distinguished colleague from Berne, Ambassador Kolo of Nigeria—“to concentrate efforts on increased action and the attainment of results...”. [*1612th meeting, para. 51.*]

40. My delegation would also like to record its appreciation of the extensive remarks on the results of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States made by the representative of the United States, Mr. Foster [*1611th meeting*]. We shall certainly consider these, especially his comments on the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in formulating our recommendations for means of putting into effect the results of the Conference.

41. With regard to action in the disarmament field, much can be done now. As stated by the leader of the Ghana delegation, Commissioner Anin, on 8 October:

“... we hope that the nuclear Powers signatories to the Treaty will proceed with a sense of urgency to reach agreement on further disarmament measures in accordance with the undertaking they have given.” [*1685th plenary meeting, para. 124.*]

42. In the view of my delegation, there is no substantial reason why we should not carry the Moscow test-ban treaty to its logical conclusion and ban all tests, including underground tests. At this juncture we should like to pay a tribute to our Swedish friends and other scientists who co-operated in the outstanding work carried out at the Swedish International Institute for Peace and Conflict Research. Thanks to their efforts, today moderate-yield and large-yield explosions can now be monitored without on-site inspection. Thus a major obstacle to banning underground tests has been removed. But knowing the ingenuity of scientists and diplomats, we can say that it will not be difficult to find new obstacles which will make agreement to ban all nuclear tests difficult. That is why my delegation would like to call a halt to the “rat race”. So long as one or more of the nuclear Powers conjures up disingenuous arguments to prevent a total test ban treaty, in the hope that underground tests might enable them to invent more sinister weapons and be “one up” on their rivals, so long will the credibility gap between the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers increase. The game of “one-upmanship” must end. The Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee should settle down seriously to a comprehensive test ban treaty or perhaps, as has been the custom, the super-Powers—if they are not doing so already—should meet behind the scenes and produce a draft comprehensive test ban treaty. Since such a treaty should be a limitation on their own freedom of action, it would go a long way in resolving the crisis of confidence between the nuclear and non-nuclear Powers.

43. We recognize the attractiveness of a phased operation if a comprehensive test ban cannot be agreed upon, but

such a phased agreement would suggest that the real reason why the nuclear Powers do not want a comprehensive test-ban treaty is not the difficulty of verification, but the desire to evolve nuclear devices of greater destructiveness.

44. In our view, the next step should be agreement on the limitation and reduction of both offensive strategic nuclear weapon delivery systems and systems of defence against ballistic missiles. It is gratifying to note that the super-Powers have agreed to hold discussions on the subject. It is our hope—indeed, it is imperative—that in their deliberations they find time to ponder over the views of the one nuclear Power in our fold which does not subscribe to the non-proliferation treaty. As Mr. Debré put it during the general debate in the General Assembly:

“To disarm is to resolve to do away with existing weapons and to prohibit all countries from manufacturing new ones.” [1683rd plenary meeting, para. 109.]

We have the assurance of Mr. Debré that:

“France . . . would be the first to join in the negotiation of a genuine form of disarmament which would redound to the security of all, and not as hitherto solely of a few.” [Ibid., para. 111.]

45. Clearly the intention exists. What is needed is the political will for genuine accommodation on both sides.

46. If all the blame for not achieving nuclear disarmament can be laid at the door of the nuclear Powers, the same cannot be said of chemical and biological disarmament. Therefore, my delegation appeals to all States to adhere to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and bacteriological methods of warfare. It is a great understatement to recall that much has happened in the science of chemistry and biology since the 1925 Convention was signed. Therefore, not only should the Protocol be implemented now, but further studies should be carried out immediately with a view to strengthening the Convention, as proposed by the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee.

47. The ultimate aim should be the prohibition of chemical and all forms of biological weapons. Disease-bearing organisms are said to be cheap to produce and small States may feel that it is a reasonable form of defence for them. But it is naive to drag one's feet in calling for the prohibition of such weapons. The major Powers, especially the super-Powers, have the best means for delivering these death-laden microbes where they want them. No, the best defence of small States is to demand the immediate prohibition of chemical and biological weapons.

48. With those observations, my delegation would like to endorse the priorities established by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. We should also like to urge serious consideration of the Soviet proposals, many parts of which we find attractive. Disarmament is such a vital problem that all possible solutions should be examined with urgency and seriousness.

49. It would be useful to consider at this session whether we have the best possible arrangement for considering this vital question of disarmament. The seventeen active members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarma-

ment deserve praise for their dedication and hard work. I am sure many of them would be the first to admit that the Committee could do with a little bit of outside push now and again. At best, it is a deliberative body. The two recent major developments were agreed upon by the super-Powers and presented to the Committee for minor amendments and endorsement. Therefore, if we are to make more rapid progress, we must find a way of bringing the pressure of world public opinion to bear directly on the major Powers, especially the super-Powers, to hasten to agree and stop the mad race. My delegation therefore considers worthy of serious consideration the questions posed about the Disarmament Commission by the representative of Yugoslavia, Mr. Bebler [1607th meeting].

50. In the view of my delegation, the Disarmament Commission, activated to embrace all States of the world, and meeting at suitable intervals, can provide a useful stimulus for agreement on specific issues by the nuclear Powers. The major Powers can then be locked up, as it were, until they reach agreement on these limited issues. The agreement they produce will then be examined by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, which will forward its recommendations to the General Assembly. Thus the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament will become the workshop and the Commission the talking shop. At present the Eighteen-Nation Committee seems to combine both roles, and this is not very efficient.

51. In asking the major Powers, especially the super-Powers, to produce draft agreements, we shall be facing reality and avoiding suspicion. At present, the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament gets nowhere without their prior agreement. Yet, when the super-Powers agree outside the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, we are frightened. Have they decided to carve us up into spheres of influence, we secretly ask ourselves? What are they up to? We try to find the catch in their proposals. Would it not be more rational to charge them with the task of agreeing so that we do not suspect their agreement?

52. Ghana, a small country, finds the burden of attending so many meetings and conferences increasingly intolerable. Therefore, our suggestion for the reactivation of the Disarmament Commission is not lightly made. We are dealing with the important question of the arms race. And, as the representative of the USSR, Mr. Malik, reminded us the other day:

“[The arms race] is diverting many millions of men from creative labour, absorbing enormous quantities of money and materials, creating new areas of tension, breeding suspicion in relations among States, and giving rise to the most dangerous possibilities of mistakes and accidents that could have unforeseeable consequences.” [1606th meeting, para. 6.]

Surely, the extra cost in human and financial resources which the suggestion entails is but a small premium to pay for such a potential gain and for our very survival.

53. If we are to make real progress in this field, we should avoid the luxury of passing resolutions which befog the issues, which each delegation interprets differently and whose main use is to provide material for doctoral dissertation by our grandchildren. We should simply and

clearly request the major Powers, especially the super-Powers, to submit as soon as possible to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, for its consideration and recommendations, draft agreements: (a) to ban all nuclear testing; (b) to stop the development of more sophisticated nuclear weapons; (c) to run down the stock of nuclear weapons and reduce conventional arms. The testing ban can be agreed upon now if there is the will but the others will take more time to evolve. However, agreement to work towards these goals will make the non-proliferation treaty meaningful and less difficult of acceptance by all.

54. This treaty will be further strengthened if the General Assembly devises a means for examining the decisions and recommendations of the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States with a view to their implementation.

55. Finally, a study of chemical and biological weapons with a view to strengthening the 1925 Geneva Convention is imperative.

56. With the rapid advance of knowledge, the problem of disarmament becomes more complex. We have to start somewhere, to solve parts of it before it grows out of hand completely and we disintegrate ourselves into the atoms of which we are made. If our great knowledge does not make us wise, it should at least teach us that folly, even when sincerely embraced, is not prudence.

57. Mr. RONAN (Ireland): The disarmament items under discussion raise issues of great political complexity involving international peace and security in which this Organization and all mankind have a vital stake. We are dealing with a fundamental cause of tension and instability in international relations and the measures which should be taken by States in the nuclear age to establish a world order in which all men can live their lives in peace and freedom and in which resources and skills can be used for economic and social progress rather than wasted in the mad momentum of the nuclear and conventional arms races. To deal comprehensively with all these issues would require exhaustive treatment. Accordingly, my delegation will confine itself to expressing its views as briefly and as clearly as possible on what we consider to be the most important aspects of the disarmament questions on our agenda.

58. The advances of modern science and technology offer mankind the prospect of an era of rapid progress and prosperity in which the evils of poverty, ignorance and disease can be eliminated, but these advances have also produced a destructive capacity at which the imagination boggles. Political wisdom has lagged behind the growth in knowledge. But it is becoming apparent that the advances in science have made international co-operation and interdependence a categorical imperative, and that this imperative applies equally to the most powerful of nations and to the medium and smaller States.

59. If war is not a rational instrument of policy and if the danger of a nuclear holocaust is to be eliminated, no effort must be spared to resolve international differences and to control man's increasingly destructive capacity. It was for such basic purposes that this Organization was established and it was for those reasons that my delegation, led by the Irish Minister for External Affairs, worked to bring out the

dangers for international peace and security which are implicit in the wider spread of nuclear weapons and to secure agreement on the need for a non-proliferation treaty. Although nearly seven years elapsed between the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 1665 (XVI) endorsing these aims, and the opening for signature on 1 July 1968 of the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the patience and wisdom displayed by the nuclear Powers and the other Members of the United Nations who achieved this result is gratifying.

60. The opening of the Treaty for signature is a watershed in the history of arms control. For we believe, with the representative of Sweden and others, that further significant disarmament measures could not be accomplished until the Treaty was concluded. It is now a focal instrument for attaining an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and the non-nuclear Powers and in this way it offers the best lever we are likely to have for the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons, a cessation of the nuclear arms race, and nuclear disarmament.

61. The Treaty was more thoroughly debated than most international instruments before its approval by an overwhelming majority of Member States at the resumed part of the twenty-second session of the General Assembly. It is therefore disappointing that of the ninety-five Member States which voted for resolution 2373 (XXII), and of the more than eighty Member States which have since signed the treaty, only two States—Ireland and Nigeria—have so far ratified it. It has, however, been encouraging to hear at this session that many Member States have decided to ratify the Treaty and have put in hand the necessary constitutional steps for doing so. It is to be hoped that all States, nuclear and non-nuclear, will see their way to becoming parties to the Treaty and that it will enter into force without significant delay.

62. In urging early ratification of the non-proliferation Treaty, we are by no means minimizing the seriousness of what happened in Central Europe last August. Indeed, at that time the Minister for External Affairs of Ireland, Mr. Frank Aiken, issued the following statement, a copy of which was sent to the Secretary-General:

"The invasion of Czechoslovakia is a clear case of the use of force against her territorial integrity and political independence in breach of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the duty of the Security Council to call upon the aggressors to withdraw their armed forces at once from the territory of Czechoslovakia and cease all interference in her internal affairs."

63. While there has been no change in our attitude, we believe it is of the utmost importance that this should not lead us to deviate from the pursuit of the establishment of conditions which would tend to promote international peace and harmony. One of the most effective of such steps would be the entry into force of the non-proliferation Treaty.

64. While it is desirable to proclaim on suitable occasions the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, this should not blind us to the political realities or become a mere

cliché. The road to disarmament will be facilitated if the basic causes of international conflicts and tension can be solved. But unswerving continuous efforts must be made in the nuclear age, above all between the nuclear Powers, to agree on measures that will serve the interests of all States. The short-term disarmament objective must be to seek limited pragmatic agreements on specific measures of arms limitation and reduction designed to eliminate the risk of confrontation and to promote the prospects of collective security and the long-term goal of general and complete disarmament. Agreements in one area of arms control will facilitate progress in another and the achievement of political settlements, for instance in Viet-Nam, the Middle East and Central Europe, will both facilitate and benefit from arms control and disarmament agreements.

65. The non-proliferation Treaty is a powerful stimulus to prevent a drift to international and nuclear anarchy in the world, but it must be followed by further effective measures in the direction of nuclear weapons containment and arms reduction. The super-Powers now find themselves in a political environment where their usable power and nuclear arsenals tend to have a more marginal and perhaps diminishing influence on the broad course of international events. They have a serious responsibility, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the non-proliferation Treaty, for taking initiatives and new approaches which will contain the momentum of the arms race. This would apply particularly to expensive new strategic weapons systems. A moratorium on ballistic missile systems of defence should be sought and efforts should then be made to freeze ballistic delivery systems and to work for their reduction. If progress were achieved in those areas, it could open the way for negotiations on other measures such as a freeze on strategic delivery vehicles, a verifiable cut-off in the production of fissionable material, the reduction and elimination of nuclear stockpiles and so on. The practical and psychological effects of such measures of vertical non-proliferation could be very great indeed.

66. Of great aid to positive decisions on signing and ratifying the non-proliferation Treaty has been Security Council resolution 255 (1968) on security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty. The genuine intentions so solemnly expressed on that occasion by the nuclear Powers concerned will act as a strong deterrent to those who would threaten a non-nuclear State with nuclear weapons. The guarantees given would also have the effect of persuading a nuclear belligerent to keep nuclear weapons out of a dispute with a non-nuclear State. It is satisfactory to note that these guarantees have been found acceptable by a number of potentially nuclear countries. The guarantees could possibly be extended if it were necessary in other cases by various collective security arrangements. The whole subject is indeed one which was thoroughly discussed at the Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States held in Geneva this summer, although the views expressed and the positions taken at the Conference were not in accord on rather fundamental aspects of the question.

67. Likewise the Conference devoted considerable attention to the question of co-operation in the field of peaceful uses of atomic energy and made some useful recommendations. However, in our view some of the

proposals did not take adequate account of the provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty, and others, we thought, involved ideas implying elements of proliferation. We continue to regard the provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty in this connexion as being basically sound, given the era of plutonium plenty with which we are faced, and we are confident that the nuclear Powers will honour fully their obligations under the Treaty to place at the disposal of the non-nuclear States parties to the Treaty the fruits of their technological experience in the matter of the utilization for peaceful purposes of nuclear energy.

68. On the question of the establishment of a new committee which would have certain powers of supervision and co-ordination in nuclear energy matters, I am bound to say that my Government harbours serious doubts and reservations on this suggestion, given the existence and terms of reference of such bodies as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We cannot but feel, too, that the proposal might, even unwittingly, lead to delays in the ratification and entry into force of the non-proliferation Treaty.

69. Unlike any restriction on the testing of nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes, the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty would have great relevance to the pace and pattern of nuclear disarmament. Progress in seismology detection and identification is reaching the point where there is growing confidence that the faithful observance of such a treaty could be verified. What is required more is international acceptance of the principle of a total test ban. To move from a partial test ban treaty ratified by most States to a comprehensive test ban treaty ratified by all States, which would be a qualification for its complete effectiveness, will require patient and persistent efforts.

70. Another area of potential co-operation to give effect to the intent of the non-proliferation Treaty is that of nuclear-free zones or areas of law or peace. Mr. Frank Aiken, the Irish Minister for External Affairs, has on very many occasions in the past pleaded for the establishment in different parts of the world of such areas of law or peace, which, by circumscribing and, as it were, insulating the problems arising between States comprised in such an area, would gradually bring about the world-wide system of peace and security that alone will permit the maximum utilization of material resources for the benefit of mankind and the advancement of those cultural and spiritual values which enhance and are indeed a necessary concomitant of material well-being.

71. The conclusion of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America⁸ in 1967 was greatly welcomed by my delegation as a milestone of great significance in the long campaign to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons so that the nations of the world might avoid committing nuclear suicide. The Treaty was not only a concrete measure for the benefit of the peoples of Latin America but an indication of how adequate control

⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-second Session, Annexes*, agenda item 91, document A/C.1/946.

measures could be applied and how the peaceful uses of atomic energy in non-nuclear States could be made compatible with the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The speedy ratification of this Treaty and its Protocols by all the States concerned will give a good example of how the wastage of resources and skills on a nuclear weapons race can be prevented and how they can be used instead for the economic and social progress of the region. When eleven Latin American States offer the needed waivers in their ratifications so that they are bound by the Treaty, which may be fairly soon, and the operating agency comes into being, this new impetus may in time induce more States to accept the obligations of the Treaty. It can also have a far-reaching effect on the rest of the world if all or most of Latin America can formally renounce nuclear weapons and establish an effective control system to enforce the ban. The agreements on nuclear-free zones in Antarctica and outer space are also useful models for the establishment of such zones in other parts of the world. Each area has, of course, its own particular problems and the solutions are not always common, but there is scope for considerably more progress in the field of regional arms limitation.

72. My delegation welcomes the recommendation of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament that the Secretary-General be requested to appoint a group of experts to study the nature and the effects of the possible use of chemical and bacteriological means of warfare and we shall support the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.444 and Add.1 and 2. We would hope that the study would clearly cover the horrifying biological nerve agents such as tabun, sakn and soman, and accordingly we shall support the amendments proposed by Malta in document A/C.1/L.445 and Add.1 which would provide better guidance for the proposed group of experts in their task. We would also hope that the report of the experts would enable conclusions to be drawn on the adequacy of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 in the present conditions.

73. My delegation already expressed its views here on 1 November [1595th meeting] on another new disarmament topic, namely, the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. We suggested that a priority should be given to a study of the problem with a view to proposing a solution, including the possibility of negotiating an international agreement, as in the case of outer space, confining the utilization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction exclusively for peaceful purposes.

74. As regards the memorandum of the Soviet Union [A/7134], my delegation agrees that the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament be requested to undertake an examination of the suggested programme, although many of the proposals are not altogether new. We would continue

to have reservations on the question of the utility of endeavouring to negotiate a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. While appreciating the moral value of any possible renunciation of the use of those weapons, we are not convinced that it would be politically possible to obtain a firm and reliable renunciation from all the nuclear Powers, nor would such a convention add anything to the clear terms of the Charter forbidding use of force and acts of aggression. Such a convention might even be positively dangerous in so far as it might develop a false sense of security and lead States to reduce their efforts to halt the further spread of nuclear weapons and establish a world security system which would prevent war and ensure the gradual elimination of national ownership of such weapons. In this connexion, the group of consultant experts appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2162 A (XXI) came to the following conclusion in paragraph 91 of its report:⁹

“Security for all countries of the world must be sought through the elimination of all stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the banning of their use, by way of general and complete disarmament.”

Some other proposals in the memorandum of the Soviet Union might run into the objection that they would upset the present strategic balance, which after all is staving off war and should therefore not be upset.

75. In conclusion, we must stress that time is the key element if things are not to fall apart and if the world is not to be engulfed in a cataclysm of nuclear anarchy. The same sense of urgency which moved the super-Powers and the non-nuclear States to negotiate a number of disarmament measures to date, culminating with the non-proliferation Treaty, should inspire all to grasp the opportunity we now have to eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust and move on, before it is too late, to halting the arms race—a halt which could be a great boon to all mankind. The achievement of the non-proliferation Treaty, if ratified rapidly, can mark the beginning of a new era of international co-operation and security. Both the nuclear and the non-nuclear States must bend their efforts to get the priorities right and to work for a stable world system of collective security upon which all States could rely for their defence. This could be done, as Mr. Aiken suggested here last year:

“...by improving and strengthening the capacity of the United Nations as an effective instrument for maintaining international peace and security, and by developing its role in peace-keeping and the peaceful settlement of disputes.” [1547th meeting, para. 132.]

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

⁹ See foot-note 5.