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DÉLÉGATION NÉERLANDAISE AUPRÈS DU CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD



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Paris, October 27, 1965

My dear Secretary General,

You may be interested in reading the speech on disarmament questions delivered on October 21 before the First Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly by the Netherlands State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. M. van der Stoel.

I therefore enclose the text of this speech and I would like to draw your special attention to those parts of the text dealing with the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Yours sincerely,

*Glunboom*

His Excellency  
Mr. Manlio Brosio,  
Secretary General of the  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
Paris.

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Agenda item 106:

Non-proliferation of nuclear  
weapons.

Statement by His Excellency  
Dr. M. van der Stoep, State  
Secretary for Foreign Affairs,  
in Committee I, on October 21,  
1965.

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Mr. Chairman,

Last week our Committee agreed to give first priority to the debate on the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In the view of the Netherlands Delegation this was a logical and wise decision. Problems relating to peace and security outrank all other international issues in importance. Looking ahead to the future, we are all deeply conscious of the fact that the only chance of preserving world peace lies in preventing nuclear anarchy. But how could it be possible to forestall such anarchy, if we do not succeed in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons? Halting the further dissemination of these weapons is therefore the most urgent problem, confronting us today and our deliberations on this item of our agenda are of the gravest consequences.

Mr. Chairman, at the outset, I would like to deal with some objections that are still being raised against the conclusion of a Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

First, in some countries voices may be heard arguing against the signing of such a treaty, as long as certain, specific national aims have not been achieved. I, for one, confidently hope that no responsible government, with a clear perception of the fundamental problems of the nuclear age, will heed such

- advice -

advice. The advocates of such a policy seem to forget that the community of States has one overriding, common interest: survival, - and that therefore a non-proliferation agreement, by lessening the risk of nuclear conflict, is likewise of vital interest to each individual State, no matter what its particular problems in other fields may be.

In the second place, it has been said that the conclusion of a worldwide agreement prohibiting any increase in the number of nuclear powers would, in effect, consolidate the status quo by reserving a privileged position for those countries, countries which already belong to the so called "nuclear club".

Mr. Chairman, I am speaking on behalf of the government of a country, which is at present and firmly intends to remain "non-nuclear". I do not lack understanding for the position of those who object to the perpetuation of a big power monopoly, but it would appear to me that such arguments are only of relative value and that they miss the following, important point. As I said a short while ago, both nuclear and non-nuclear powers have a common stake in putting an end, once and for all, to the spread of nuclear armament, which threatens to become fatal to all countries, whether or not they possess these weapons themselves. Of course, I do by no means want to imply that we are not interested in, or want to belittle the importance of nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, we feel that nothing should be left undone to seek and obtain the reduction and, eventually, the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the big powers. But it is our firm conviction that in the present circumstances the best way to further this broader objective would be first to conclude a comprehensive treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It will be clear that such a treaty is only meaningful, if it receives a wide measure of acceptance, in particular from the non-nuclear powers.

In this connection, I am glad to note that the United States government likewise regards a non-proliferation treaty, inter alia, as a stepping stone towards nuclear disarmament. This is borne out by the fifth preambular paragraph of the American draft for a non-proliferation treaty, referring to the desire to reduce armaments, including in particular nuclear armaments. We miss a similar proposal in the draft-

treaty, submitted by the distinguished representative of the USSR. Furthermore, the United States, at the Geneva Conference, have put forward a proposal to the effect that the United States and the USSR should reach agreement on "a demonstrated destruction of a substantial number of nuclear weapons from their respective stocks". We sincerely hope that the government of the USSR will adopt a positive attitude towards this new and far-reaching proposition which is, in fact, a bridge that may lead from "arms Control" to "disarmament". Should the offer, made by the United States be put into effect, this would constitute the first practical example of an agreed and verified reduction of military nuclear stockpiles.

Mr. Chairman, both the governments of the United States and of the USSR have presented draft-treaties on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The urgency and importance which the two largest nuclear powers attach to an agreement on this issue would seem to warrant a cautious optimism. Unfortunately, however, we cannot conceal our grave concern and disappointment, in view of the attitude of the USSR with regard to possible nuclear arrangements between the members of NATO, which are now the subject of study and discussion within the Alliance. My delegation deems it important to make its views on this matter quite clear. It is our conviction, Mr. Chairman, that an arrangement for nuclear sharing in the Atlantic context is in no way contrary to, or conflicting with the principle of non-proliferation, provided that these weapons cannot be used without the consent of existing nuclear powers - in other words: as long as there are no additional fingers on the trigger. On the other hand, I trust that no country, including the USSR, will have any objection to a few more fingers on the safety catch. In particular, I hope that the government of the USSR will recognize the true state of affairs and refrain henceforth from objecting to a nuclear arrangement within NATO, purporting solely to provide additional guarantees to non-nuclear members of the Alliance that, in the elaboration of nuclear strategy their vital security interests will be taken into account. Otherwise, we would be compelled to conclude that the action of the government of the USSR is not motivated by a genuine concern for nuclear dissemination, but is prompted by the desire to thwart the strengthening of the cohesion of the defensive NATO-alliance.

- A first reading -

A first reading of the text of the draft treaty, submitted by the USSR, could lead to the conclusion that Article I and II, appear to be designed even to prohibit certain defensive arrangements, which now exist within the NATO-Alliance.

Mr. Chairman, while underlining the seriousness of the situation, previous speakers in this debate have stressed the imperative necessity to take bold and immediate steps; time is running out fast and it may soon be too late. I therefore venture to appeal to the government of the USSR not to jeopardize the chances of agreement by persisting in its present attitude.

Mr. Chairman, in the XIXth General Assembly, in the UN-Disarmament Commission, which met a few months ago, as well as in the course of this debate, suggestions have been made that the question of the non-transfer and non-acquisition of nuclear weapons should be placed in a broader context and that it might be advisable to adopt certain other measures also aimed at eliminating the nuclear threat. There seemed to be little or no basic difference of opinion as to the usefulness of such measures in general; on the other hand, many speakers held diverging views as to whether these measures should be regarded as "integrated with", or, merely, as "related to" a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear armaments. With regard to this problem I would like to reiterate the view of my government, as stated by the Netherlands representative in the UN-Disarmament Commission. We see no advantage in seeking a solution by means of a comprehensive system of "integrated measures". The road leading to disarmament and arms control is arduous and full of obstacles. In spite of the general desire to halt the spread of nuclear weapons an agreement on non-proliferation has not yet been reached. It would therefore seem unwise to us to complicate the negotiations on the Treaty unduly by the introduction of new elements. Perfection, Mr. Chairman, might well prove to be the enemy of success.

We therefore fully agree with the recommendation of the UN-Disarmament Commission, of July 15, to give priority to the question of non-proliferation, while at the same time "giving close attention to the various suggestions that agreement could be facilitated by adopting a programme of certain related measures".

- Mr. Chairman, -

Mr. Chairman, yesterday we have listened with close attention to the explanation by the distinguished representative of Italy of his Government's proposal for a unilateral Non-Acquisition Declaration.

We do not fail to recognize the constructive elements of this proposal. After due consideration of the various aspects of the matter, however, we strongly feel that it is of paramount importance to pursue our objective with the greatest possible urgency and a determined singleness of purpose. We therefore have some doubt, as to whether a Unilateral Non-Acquisition Declaration could, under the present circumstances, contribute effectively towards reaching agreement on a non-proliferation treaty. While it is conceivable that, in the event of a stalemate, it may be expedient to fall back on a Unilateral Non-Acquisition Declaration, in order to gain precious time to re-assess the situation, we are concerned that the acceptance at the present stage, of the proposed moratorium by a large number of states may give rise to premature optimism and obscure the fact that with regard to the cardinal issue, i.e. the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty, little as no progress has as yet been made.

Furthermore, a non-acquisition declaration would not affect the big atomic powers, but only be binding on the non-nuclear states, without adding substantially to their security. I therefore feel as the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom has pointed out, that it is important seriously to explore the possibilities of giving effective assurances, guaranteeing against nuclear attack, which might be a strong incentive for the non-nuclear powers to refrain from acquiring nuclear weapons themselves.

One of the most effective measures related to the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons would be a treaty prohibiting all nuclear tests including underground nuclear explosions.

Such a treaty would have the psychological advantage of imposing the same obligations on both nuclear and non-nuclear powers. We note with satisfaction that the US-government has initiated a comprehensive research programme to improve the capabilities for monitoring seismic events. We sincerely hope that the government of the USSR will respond favourably to the offer by the US-government to exchange all relevant scientific and other information in order to facilitate agreement on a complete test ban.

In this connection I would like to express our appreciation and support for the initiative taken by the government of Sweden with a view to establishing "an international seismological data service, giving access to first class data for independent analysis". This proposal is entirely in line with the views of my own government on "international fact-finding" which have repeatedly been expressed by the Netherlands delegation on other occasions. For similar reasons, the Netherlands government attaches great importance to the adoption with almost unanimous approval by the 9th General Conference of the IAEA, held in Tokyo in September last, of a revised safeguards system. An undertaking by all parties to a non-proliferation treaty to accept the application of IAEA-safeguard to their peaceful nuclear activities would be an important corollary to the provisions of such a treaty, besides constituting another, practical implementation of international fact-finding. The USSR-draft does not contain any reference to international safeguards. In connection with the second paragraphs of Art. I and Art. II of the Soviet draft treaty, I should like to point out, Mr. Chairman, that the application of IAEA-safeguards would be the best guarantee to ensure that "research or other information or documentation", exchanged between parties to the treaty, do not further a military purpose.

Mr. Chairman, we shall deal at length with the creation of nuclear-free zones, when we reach the relevant item of the agenda. Suffice it to say that the Kingdom of the Netherlands and in particular the two parts in the Western hemisphere, are following with keen interest and sympathy the current efforts of the Latin American countries to establish a denuclearized zone on their sub-continent. My government has already indicated to the Preparatory Commission for the Denuclearization of Latin-America that it is prepared, in principle, to assume for Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles the same obligations as will be entered into by the Latin American States. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is willing to become a party to a multilateral treaty on the understanding that there will be sufficient agreement amongst the countries of the area and that adequate measures of verification and inspection are provided for. With reference to the latter remark Mr. Chairman, I find it most encouraging that the Draft Treaty for the Denuclearization of Latin America stipulates that the parties shall assume all the obligations and adopt all the procedures of the IAEA's

revised safeguards system.

From my previous remarks, Mr.Chairman, it will already have become clear that we gladly support the desire expressed by the African countries to declare their own area a denuclearized zone.

In contrast with certain other areas, the prevailing political and military conditions in both Latin America and Africa do not seem to prelude an early agreement on a denuclearization-treaty, because of the absence of nuclear weapons in those zones. We therefore wish all governments concerned in these two areas a full measure of success.

Mr.Chairman, after this brief digression I want to say, that we favour the earliest possible resumption of the deliberations of the ENDC in Geneva on the two most urgent problems, viz.1) the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; 2) a comprehensive testban treaty.

At this juncture, I shall not dwell on the questions of a World Disarmament Conference, which is a separate item of our agenda. It is my opinion, however, that the work of the ENDC-Committee should in no way be inhibited by the prospect that a world conference may be convened at some future date.