

Negotiation Forum

The paragraph takes no particular stand on what forum should be used for negotiation. On many occasions I have stressed my preference for a return to the Ten-Nation Committee because of its obvious advantages. The only criterion suggested in the resolution is that the negotiations should be resumed in a body agreeable to the negotiators, which, in practical terms, means that the nuclear powers must agree on the forum.

They are encouraged to consider, however, the appointment of one or more impartial officers to assist in the negotiations. In my statement on October 19, I explained the Canadian suggestion for an impartial chairman, and others in this debate have expressed themselves in a similar sense. Our own experience in the Ten-Nation Committee would lead us to believe that these suggestions merit careful consideration.

This second operative paragraph is, and must be, largely an earnest expression of hope, because serious negotiations can take place only if the negotiators themselves are willing to act. The remaining operative paragraphs, however, seek to give that hope some promise of fulfilment and also to turn to good advantage whatever interval may elapse between now and the time when the desired negotiations can be resumed. These other paragraphs call for the immediate establishment of United Nations machinery specifically charged with responsibility for assisting in bringing about an early resumption of negotiations.

Special Committee

Our proposal recommends that an ad hoc committee be established by the Disarmament Commission. In my earlier speech I spoke about an advisory or watchdog committee. I believe that the setting up of an ad hoc committee, a modification that has emerged from consultations with other delegations, is just as appropriate under present circumstances. The committee should be composed of a limited number of states that do not possess nuclear weapons and are to be selected on the usual United Nations basis of equitable geographical representation. It is rather important, from the point of view of efficiency, that the committee be not too large.

The question of composition is to be decided in the Disarmament Commission obviously on the basis of close consultation among delegations. It is the view of the sponsors that there should be no delay in establishing the ad hoc committee. The Disarmament Commission could and should meet in the course of the present session to carry out these recommendations by the General Assembly.

The terms of reference of the ad hoc committee have purposely been stated in rather general language. It would be a mistake to limit the group's activities by setting down a list of matters to which it should devote its attention exclusively. Besides, any elaboration of the role of the proposed committee should be the responsibility of the Disarmament Commission. We have made it clear, however, that it has an urgent responsibility for dealing at once with the problem of getting negotiations restarted.