

This was decided at the last session of the General Assembly.

We are now only eight weeks away from the next session. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider seriously what this Conference should be doing in the coming weeks to fulfil the specific mandate which it has been given.

Against Adjournment

I have been concerned about a growing tendency to accept with resignation a return to the General Assembly with virtually no progress to report and furthermore to adjourn this Conference while the General Assembly is in session. This must be resisted and with it the temptation to spend the intervening weeks in building up a case for blaming others for failure to achieve results here in Geneva.

Mr. Chairman, can we believe that any member of this Conference would be held free of responsibility by the United Nations if we recess for the purpose of wrangling in New York? The agreed principle which I have already quoted shows clearly that the United Nations expects efforts to reach agreement here to be continued without interruption. This Disarmament Conference has the specific injunction to persevere, which was not the case with its predecessors. When the Conference was set up, every member of the United Nations, of course, was aware of the difficulties we should face, but, for that very reason, the Conference was instructed to continue its efforts without interruption.

One gratifying characteristic of the discussions here has been the objectivity and the seriousness with which the negotiations have been conducted day by day. If we go to New York and indulge in recriminations and mutual accusations of bad faith, the good faith, the good atmosphere in this Conference would certainly suffer. In fact, I am afraid it would be at an end.

I recognize, of course, that the forthcoming General Assembly will wish to discuss disarmament and the progress that we have made so far. However, it does seem to me self-evident that all the United Nations can do, given its previous decision, is to say to this Conference: "Continue your efforts to carry out the task which you have been set". Obviously, Mr. Chairman, Geneva must continue to be the negotiating forum.

Role of the Uncommitted

In this connection, let me emphasize once more the important role of the eight uncommitted countries. They were chosen from all parts of the world precisely to be representatives of the United Nations as a whole; here they have a vital and unique role to play in helping to bring about agreement. They have been constructive participants in all aspects of the negotiations and