



Mr. BURNS (Canada): In my statement on the first item considered by this Committee on 19 October, I said the following:

"Canada has noted with great interest the recent efforts of Latin American and African countries to contribute to a solution of the problem of nuclear proliferation by examining the feasibility of establishing nuclear-free zones in their respective regions. We welcome these efforts. Canada holds the view that arrangements for nuclear-free zones can be useful in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons, provided they take account of certain principles."

I went on to mention some of the principles or desiderata which, it seems to the Canadian Government, should be taken into account in establishing nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world. I should emphasize that phrase: "in various parts of the world", because, when these three points were first put forward, we were thinking mainly in terms of the situation in Europe, where there are Canadian forces stationed and where, consequently, we are very much involved. In Latin America or in Africa Canada is not involved in the same way.

I shall not enter into a discussion of nuclear-free zones in Europe, because I understand the subject under discussion is the denuclearization of Africa.

During the debate on this first item considered by the Committee, our Vice-Chairman, speaking as the representative of Ecuador, commented on my statement and that portion of the statement which dealt with the principles we consider should be kept in mind when developing arrangements for nuclear-free zones. Our delegation agrees with the view which the representative of Ecuador expressed, and which is recorded on page 53 of document A/C.1/PV.1358, to the effect that, in applying the criteria I mentioned, we should distinguish between the proposals for nuclear-weapon-free zones in parts of the world where nuclear weapons are now employed and are part of the existing balance of military force, and the proposals for nuclear-weapon-free zones where nuclear weapons do not exist -- in regions such as Latin America and Africa.

At our 1366th meeting, the representative of Ghana also had a question in regard to the principles I mentioned, and he said:



(Mr. Burns, Canada)

"I would also like to ask the representative of Canada if African States will have to seek the agreement of South Africa or Portugal... in their bid to declare Africa a nuclear-free zone." (1366th meeting, p. 26)

The representative of Ghana also repeated the essence of this question in his statement today.

Since these questions were put by the representatives of Ecuador and Ghana, we have, as the Committee knows, heard a most informative statement by the representative of Mexico, Mr. Garcia Robles, at our 1369th meeting. He set out for us the progress which has been made by the Preparatory Committee for denuclearization of Latin America in developing an agreement for:

"preventing in radical and absolute fashion proliferation of nuclear weapons in a particular region." (1369th meeting, p. 22)

It seems to the Canadian delegation that in this statement he has clarified the problem of delimiting a nuclear weapon free zone and determining what territories should be included in it. I should like to quote his observation, recorded on page 32 of document A/C.1/PV.1369:

"As regards the definition of the boundary of the zone, it seems to us that probably the most practical method for the determination of such boundaries is the one whereby the zone in question is automatically delimited as the sum total of all the territories of the States which are or may become members of the Preparatory Committee, and of those territories concerning which, ... the responsible Government is prepared to assume the same obligations as those assumed by the Latin American States."

Following from this, it seems necessary to recognize, in creating a nuclear-free zone, that if certain States in a region will not participate in it, either the limits of the zone will be defined to exclude them, or else a determination will be made by the States favouring such a zone that they cannot bind themselves indefinitely to remain nuclear free unless all their neighbours remain nuclear-free as well, and it would seem to the Canadian delegation that operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/C.1/L.346 was framed with this consideration in mind.



(Mr. Burns, Canada)

Referring again to the question of the representative of Ghana, if one applied these considerations to defining the limits of an African nuclear-free zone, one could say that it would include the territories of all the African States which decided to adhere to the eventual treaty or whatever international instrument is to effect the agreement. There would seem to be no reason why an African nuclear-free zone so determined might not be recognized and respected by the nuclear Powers.

Members of the Committee will perhaps recall that our remarks on 19 October were also cited as a principle which ought to be taken into account: that arrangements for a nuclear-weapon-free zone should provide for verifying that the commitments undertaken are carried out. The representative of Mexico, in his statement on 29 October, referred to a preliminary draft of articles on a system of verification, inspection and control based mainly on a revised system of safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. These draft articles, we understand, are under consideration by the Governments of States members of the Preparatory Committee. We should therefore only wish to say at this time that the system of verification generally conforming to the provisions set out in the draft articles given on pages 15 to 24 of document A/5985, the Final Act of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Denuclearization of Latin America, would seem to the Canadian delegation to be appropriate and adequate to the purpose of the proposed treaty. The statements of the representatives of the United Arab Republic and of Somalia, this morning, showed, in our opinion, that the problem of verification is concerning African countries and that they are developing a sound approach to this aspect of the problem of creating a nuclear-free zone for Africa.

While there are certain phrases in the draft resolution which the Canadian delegation would like to see modified, we understand that consideration is being given to some changes in parts of the text which give pause to other delegations as well as to our own. However, the debate has shown, in our opinion, that the general question of how the denuclearization of Africa is to be brought into effect is being studied and discussed by the African nations taking a leading part in the enterprise in the careful and constructive way which is essential if the project is to be brought to a successful conclusion.

