

17th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs

Ronneby, Sweden, 3-8 September 1967

FINAL REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 7

"Current Conflicts and their Resolution"

The Group agreed that all so-called current conflicts are dangerous, entail the possibility of a thermo-nuclear war, and cause a tremendous amount of suffering.

The first point on the agenda was the Vietnam conflict.

On that subject a very wide and open discussion took place. Two main currents of opinion appeared. Some members felt that a guarantee of national independence should be provided to the countries of South-East Asia, otherwise a situation such as that which made the Vietnam war acceptable at its beginning to many U.S. citizens will probably arise again. Some members condemned the aggressive war conducted in Vietnam by the U.S.A., and were in favour of an immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. Some members drew attention to the necessity of giving asylum to all those who may feel threatened by a peace settlement.

A long discussion took place on the process of withdrawal of foreign troops, on the elections which would follow this withdrawal and its supervision.

The Group urges that a message be sent on behalf of the Conference to the President of the U.S.A., and to the Heads of State which are engaged in the Vietnam war.

The following draft was adopted:

"Taking into account the long suffering of the population of Vietnam and the risks of extension of the war, the 17th Pugwash Conference feel it necessary:

- (a) That the bombing of North Vietnam be stopped immediately and unconditionally.
- (b) That, following that cessation, negotiations should begin without any delay between all interested parties, including the F.L.N., to realize a cease-fire and to organize the withdrawal of all foreign troops, both under safeguards accepted by all parties.
- (c) That, subsequently a conference be convened to re-establish a stable peace in South-East Asia."



Some members expressed the thought that the Pugwash Movement should also call upon the allies of all the participants to use their influence to urge their governments to accept these points.

The second point on the agenda was the Israeli/Arab conflict.

A long and passionate discussion took place. No solution of this problem was agreed upon.

Some members thought that the situation has also long term aspects that cannot be handled politically in the situation existing today. We strongly call upon scientists, politicians and others, in the region as well as outside, to come together and discuss the problems of future relations between all the states existing in the area, on a basis of equality and mutual respect. We feel that such plans, if sufficiently detailed, could provide a basis not only for political action in the future, but also for diplomatic activity today.

The third point on the agenda was on some problems in Africa.

The view was expressed that we stand for the cause of national independence and democratic government in southern Africa. The movement towards democratic governments in southern Africa has been slowed down and even retrogressed in the twenty months since Pugwash met at Addis Ababa. Facts show the enhanced power of the Portuguese forces in Angola and Mozambique and the military establishments of Rhodesia and South Africa. Intensified military and economic co-operation within the white redoubt poses a great obstacle to change. At the same time the efforts of the OAU have been handicapped by internal problems besetting some of its strongest members.

Consequently, a pattern has developed of ever stronger statements of the need for action to liberate southern Africa. There is a contradiction between the understandably impassioned speeches at the United Nations and the failure to implement steps towards change. All great Powers should do much more to implement UN principles in Africa.

In a desire to enhance prospects for ensuring national independence and democratic government in Angola, Mozambique and within southern Africa generally, we call upon our African friends to make suggestions as to what is now practicable, and enter into a serious new dialogue for immediate steps towards strengthening the struggle against racialism.

At the same time we most urgently call upon the major powers to listen with greater care and to respond more concretely to the African suggestions advanced within and without the United Nations and the call for action, small or large, towards just societies for all peoples, whatever their race, religion or national origin, within southern Africa.

Among the practical steps that can be carried out even in the present very difficult situation we would like to call attention to:

1. A massive scholarship programme for African students from these areas. We have in mind programmes involving not only



thousands but tens of thousands of students, to be given the education abroad that they have been denied in their countries. Such programmes should be launched not only with a view to forming the specialists that will be able to govern the countries adequately when they attain their independence, but also with a view to supplying the liberation movements today with technical and organizational knowledge and abilities that are strongly needed in the struggle and for the post independence period.

2. Increased flow of strictly factual information about the situation in southern Africa, about conditions in prisons and detention camps, widely disseminated so as to increase world pressure on the present governments in the area.

3. We call upon and encourage the International Red Cross to investigate and report on detention conditions in southern Africa.

Some members expressed the <sup>view</sup> that we should help with all possible means the armed fight of those people who are engaged in war for their liberty and national independence.

The fourth point was on the situation in Nigeria.

Some members expressed the views that we deeply regret and deplore the tragic events in Nigeria with the murder of some 30,000 people in the past two years and the suffering of over two million refugees in the country, and regret the supply of arms to both Federal and Biafran forces at a time when peace was in prospect. We call upon Nigerian scientists from both the Federal Government and Biafra, many of whom know each other very well and have co-operated together for many years, to exercise their personal influence to bring about a cessation of hostilities, and appreciate the efforts they are already making towards achieving this goal.