



Eighth session
Agenda item 23

REGULATION, LIMITATION AND BALANCED REDUCTION OF ALL ARMED FORCES
AND ALL ARMAMENTS: REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Thor THORS (Iceland)

1. By resolution 704 (VII) of 8 April 1953, the General Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission to submit a third report to the General Assembly and to the Security Council no later than 1 September 1953. The third report^{1/} was duly submitted to the Security Council and to the Members of the United Nations.
2. At its 435th meeting on 17 September 1953, the General Assembly decided to include the report of the Disarmament Commission in the agenda of its eighth session under the title: "Regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments: report of the Disarmament Commission". At the same meeting, the General Assembly referred the item to the First Committee for consideration and report.
3. The First Committee considered the question at its 658th to 669th meetings held between 6 and 18 November 1953.
4. At the 658th meeting, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Lebanon, New Zealand, Pakistan, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America submitted a joint draft resolution (A/C.1/L.72) which was revised at the 662nd meeting (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.1) and at the 668th meeting (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.3)^{2/} to incorporate certain amendments and suggestions submitted during the debate. This revised joint draft resolution provided that the

1/ See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, 1953, Supplement for July, August and September 1953, document DC/32. See also document A/2444.

2/ A/C.1/L.72/Rev.2 was issued in French only.

General Assembly should, inter alia: (1) recognize the general wish and affirm its earnest desire to reach agreement as early as possible on a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan under international control for the regulation, limitation and reduction of all armed forces and armaments, for the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen, bacterial, chemical and all such other weapons of war and mass destruction, and for the attainment of these ends through effective measures; (2) take note of the third report of the Disarmament Commission; (3) request the Commission to continue its efforts to reach agreement on the problems with which it was concerned, taking into consideration proposals made at the eighth session of the General Assembly, and to report again to the General Assembly and to the Security Council not later than 1 September 1954; (4) call on all Member States and particularly the major Powers to intensify their efforts to assist the Disarmament Commission in its tasks and to submit to the Commission any proposals which they might have to make in the field of disarmament; and (5) suggest that the Disarmament Commission should study the desirability of establishing a sub-committee consisting of representatives of the Powers principally involved, which should seek in private an acceptable solution and report to the Disarmament Commission as soon as possible in order that the Commission might study and report on such a solution to the General Assembly and to the Security Council not later than 1 September 1954.

5. At the 660th meeting, India submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.74) to the fourteen-Power draft resolution which was revised at the 662nd meeting (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.1), at the 664th meeting (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.2), at the 666th meeting (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.3) and at the 667th meeting (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.4) to provide for (1) the insertion after the third paragraph of the preamble of a new paragraph providing that the General Assembly should express the realization that competition in the development of armaments and armed forces beyond what was necessary for the individual or collective security of Member States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations was not only economically unsound but was in itself a grave danger to peace; (2) the deletion of operative paragraph 1 and the substitution of a new paragraph providing that the Assembly should recognize the general wish and affirm its earnest desire to reach agreement as early as possible on a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan under international

control for the regulation, limitation and reduction of all armed forces and armaments, for the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen, bacterial, chemical and all such other weapons of war and mass destruction, and for the attainment of these ends through effective measures; (3) the deletion of the word "small" in operative paragraph 5; and (4) the addition of a new operative paragraph 6 suggesting that the Disarmament Commission, in order to facilitate the progress of its work, should arrange for the sub-committee, when established, to hold its private meetings as appropriate in the different countries most concerned with the problem.

6. At the 661st meeting, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.75) to the fourteen-Power draft resolution which was revised at the 664th meeting (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.1), at the 665th meeting (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.2), and at the 669th meeting (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.3) to provide for (1) the replacement of the third paragraph of the preamble by a new paragraph recognizing that, for the purposes of strengthening the peace and security of the nations and successfully settling controversial international problems, the primary task was to secure the immediate settlement of the question of the reduction of armaments, the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons and the establishment of strict international control over the observance of that prohibition; (2) the amendment of the fourth paragraph of the preamble to express the belief that progress in the above-mentioned field would also contribute to progress in the settlement of other controversial international problems; (3) the replacement of operative paragraph 1 by a new paragraph providing that the Assembly should recognize that the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons as weapons of aggression and mass destruction was contrary to the conscience and honour of the peoples and incompatible with membership in the United Nations and declare that the government which was the first to use the atomic, hydrogen or any other instrument of mass destruction against any other country would commit a crime against humanity and would be deemed a war criminal; and (4) the replacement of operative paragraph 3 by a new paragraph providing that the Disarmament Commission should be requested to submit to the Security Council not later than 1 March 1954 proposals providing in the first place for a substantial reduction in the armaments of the five Powers - the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, the People's Republic

of China and the USSR - and also for the prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other types of weapons of mass destruction together with the simultaneous establishment of strict international control over the observance of that prohibition.

7. At the 662nd meeting, Australia submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.76) to the fourteen-Power draft resolution, providing for the insertion, after the third paragraph of the preamble, of a new paragraph expressing belief that the continued development of weapons of mass destruction such as atomic and hydrogen bombs had given additional urgency to efforts to bring about effectively controlled disarmament throughout the world, as the existence of civilization itself might be at stake. This amendment was accepted by the fourteen Powers and incorporated in the revised joint draft resolution (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.3).

8. At the 664th meeting, the USSR submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.77) to the Australian amendment (A/C.1/L.76) providing for the deletion of the words "effectively controlled disarmament throughout the world" and their replacement by the following: "the prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other types of weapons of mass destruction and the establishment at the same time of strict international control over the observance of that prohibition". At the 666th meeting, the USSR withdrew this amendment.

9. At the 665th meeting, Egypt submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.78) to the joint draft resolution providing for the addition, at the end of operative paragraph 5, of the following: "as soon as possible in order that the Commission may study and report on such a solution to the General Assembly and to the Security Council not later than 1 September 1954." This amendment was accepted by the fourteen Powers and incorporated in the revised joint draft resolution (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.3).

10. At the same meeting, Poland submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.79) to the Indian amendment (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.2) to replace, in point 1, the words "competitive rearmament" by "an armament race". At the 668th meeting, Poland withdrew this amendment.

11. At the 666th meeting, Peru submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.80) to the Indian amendment (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.2) to replace, in point 1, the words "competitive rearmament" by "competition in the development of armaments and armed forces beyond

what is necessary for the individual or collective security of Member States". The addition of the words "in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations" was orally accepted by the representative of Peru at the same meeting. This amendment, as revised, was accepted by India and incorporated in its revised amendment (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.4).

12. At the 667th meeting, Yugoslavia submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.81) to the joint draft resolution to replace, in the first paragraph of the preamble, the words "disarmament and the regulation of armaments" by "the regulation, limitation and reduction of all armed forces and armaments and the elimination of all weapons adaptable to mass destruction including atomic, hydrogen, bacterial and chemical weapons". At the 668th meeting, Yugoslavia withdrew this amendment.

13. At the 667th meeting, Yugoslavia submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.82) to the Australian amendment (A/C.1/L.76) providing for the insertion, between the words "world" and "as", of "in order to eliminate altogether the use and power to use atomic, hydrogen, bacterial, chemical and all other such weapons of mass destruction". At the 669th meeting, Yugoslavia withdrew this amendment.

14. At the 667th meeting, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.83) to the joint draft resolution replacing the first paragraph of the preamble with a new paragraph providing that the General Assembly should reaffirm the responsibility of the United Nations for considering the problem of disarmament and the regulation of armaments and affirm the need of providing for (a) the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments; (b) the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other types of weapons of mass destruction; and (c) the effective international control of atomic energy to ensure the prohibition of atomic weapons and the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only; the whole programme to be carried out under effective international control and in such a way that no State would have cause to fear that its security was endangered. This amendment was incorporated in the revised fourteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.3).

15. At the same meeting, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.84) to the joint draft resolution amending operative paragraph 3 to provide that the Assembly should request the Commission

to continue its efforts to reach agreement on the problems with which it was concerned, taking into consideration the proposals made at the eighth session of the Assembly, and to report again to the Assembly and to the Security Council not later than 1 September 1954. This amendment was incorporated in the revised fourteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.3).

16. At the 667th meeting, India submitted amendments (A/C.1/L.85) to the revised USSR amendments (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.2) providing for (1) the addition to the first paragraph of the preamble, after the words "and the regulation of armaments", of "including the problems of prohibition and elimination of atomic, hydrogen, chemical, bacterial and all such other types of weapons of mass destruction under international control and effective measures for the enforcement of such prohibition and elimination"; and (2) the amendment of the third paragraph of the preamble to express the belief that progress in the field referred to in paragraph 1 of this preamble would also contribute to progress in the settlement of other controversial international problems and that progress in either field would contribute to progress in the other. The first of these amendments was not put to the vote; following the rejection of the first part of the second amendment at the 669th meeting, the second part was withdrawn.

17. At the 667th meeting, India submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.86) providing that the General Assembly should remit to the Disarmament Commission for its consideration paragraphs 2, 4 and 5 of the USSR proposals (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.2). At the 669th meeting, India withdrew this draft resolution.

18. At the 668th meeting, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Lebanon, New Zealand, Pakistan, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America submitted an amendment (A/C.1/L.87) to paragraph 4 of the revised USSR amendment (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.2) providing that the General Assembly should recognize that, whatever the weapons used, aggression was contrary to the conscience and honour of the peoples and incompatible with membership in the United Nations and was the gravest of all crimes against peace and security.

19. At the 669th meeting, the Committee proceeded to vote paragraph by paragraph on the fourteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.72/Rev.3), the Indian amendments (A/C.1/L.74/Rev.4), the USSR amendments (A/C.1/L.75/Rev.3), the Indian amendment (A/C.1/L.85) and the fourteen-Power amendment (A/C.1/L.87) with the following results:

Preamble

The first paragraph of the preamble of the fourteen-Power draft resolution was adopted by 59 votes to none.

The second paragraph was adopted by 54 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The USSR amendment relating to the third paragraph was rejected by 37 votes to 5, with 17 abstentions.

The third paragraph was adopted by 54 votes to 5.

The first paragraph of the Indian amendment to the USSR amendment relating to the fourth paragraph was rejected by 27 votes to 21, with 10 abstentions. The second paragraph was therefore not put to the vote.

The USSR amendment relating to the fourth paragraph was rejected by 33 votes to 14, with 12 abstentions.

The fourth paragraph was adopted by 53 votes to none, with 6 abstentions.

The fifth paragraph was adopted by 53 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The sixth paragraph was adopted by 59 votes to none.

The seventh paragraph was adopted by 54 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The eighth paragraph was adopted by 54 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

Operative part

The Committee decided, by 40 votes to 5, with 15 abstentions, to give priority in voting to the fourteen-Power amendment.

The fourteen-Power amendment to the USSR amendment relating to paragraph 1 of the operative part of the fourteen-Power draft resolution was adopted by 53 votes to none, with 6 abstentions. The fourteen-Power amendment having been adopted, the Committee decided, by 36 votes to 5, with 17 abstentions, not to vote on the USSR amendment.

Paragraph 1, as amended, was then adopted by 53 votes to none, with 5 abstentions, the fourteen-Power amendment becoming a new paragraph 2 with subsequent paragraphs being renumbered accordingly.

Paragraph 3 was adopted by 52 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The USSR amendment relating to paragraph 4 was rejected by 36 votes to 5, with 17 abstentions.

Paragraph 4 was adopted by 53 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

Paragraph 5 was adopted by 54 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

Paragraph 6 was adopted by 54 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The Indian amendment providing for an additional paragraph was adopted by 45 votes to none, with 13 abstentions.

The fourteen-Power draft resolution as a whole, as amended, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 54 votes to none, with 5 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Abstaining: Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

20. The First Committee therefore recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

REGULATION, LIMITATION AND BALANCED REDUCTION OF ALL ARMED FORCES AND
ALL ARMAMENTS: REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the responsibility of the United Nations for considering the problem of disarmament and affirming the need of providing for:

- (a) The regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments,
- (b) The elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other types of weapons of mass destruction,
- (c) The effective international control of atomic energy to insure the prohibition of atomic weapons and the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only,

the whole programme to be carried out under effective international control and in such a way that no State would have cause to fear that its security was endangered,

Believing that the continued development of weapons of mass destruction such as atomic and hydrogen bombs has given additional urgency to efforts to bring about effectively controlled disarmament throughout the world, as the existence of civilization itself may be at stake,

Mindful that progress in the settlement of existing international disputes and the resulting re-establishment of confidence are vital to the attainment of peace and disarmament and that efforts to reach agreement on a comprehensive and co-ordinated disarmament programme with adequate safeguards should be made concurrently with progress in the settlement of international disputes,

Believing that progress in either field would contribute to progress in the other,

Realizing that competition in the development of armaments and armed forces beyond what is necessary for the individual or collective security of Member States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations is not only economically unsound but is in itself a grave danger to peace,

Conscious of the continuing desire of all nations, by lightening the burden of armaments, to release more of the world's human and economic resources for peace,

Having received the third report^{1/} of the Disarmament Commission of 20 August 1953, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 704 (VII) of 8 April 1953,

Endorsing the Commission's hope that recent international events will create a more propitious atmosphere for reconsideration of the disarmament question, the capital importance of which, in conjunction with other questions affecting the maintenance of peace, is recognized by all,

1. Recognizes the general wish and affirms its earnest desire to reach agreement as early as possible on a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan under international control for the regulation, limitation and reduction of all armed forces and all armaments, for the elimination and prohibition of atomic, hydrogen, bacterial, chemical and all such other weapons of war and mass destruction, and for the attainment of these ends through effective measures;

1/ See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, 1953, Supplement for July, August and September 1953, document DC/32.

2. Recognizes that, whatever the weapons used, aggression is contrary to the conscience and honour of the peoples and incompatible with membership in the United Nations and is the gravest of all crimes against peace and security throughout the world;
 3. Takes note of the third report of the Disarmament Commission;
 4. Requests the Commission to continue its efforts to reach agreement on the problems with which it is concerned, taking into consideration proposals made at the eighth session of the General Assembly, and to report again to the General Assembly and to the Security Council not later than 1 September 1954;
 5. Calls on all Member States and particularly the major Powers to intensify their efforts to assist the Disarmament Commission in its tasks and to submit to the Commission any proposals which they have to make in the field of disarmament;
 6. Suggests that the Disarmament Commission study the desirability of establishing a sub-committee consisting of representatives of the Powers principally involved, which should seek in private an acceptable solution and report to the Disarmament Commission as soon as possible in order that the Commission may study and report on such a solution to the General Assembly and to the Security Council not later than 1 September 1954;
 7. Further suggests to the Disarmament Commission in order to facilitate the progress of its work to arrange for the sub-committee when established, to hold its private meetings as appropriate in the different countries most concerned with the problem.
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