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Chairman: Mr. Victor A. BELAUNDE (Peru).

**Programme of work of the Committee
(continued)**

1. The CHAIRMAN said he had carefully considered the suggestions made at the conclusion of the previous meeting by the representative of Greece with a view to speeding up the work of the Committee. He observed, however, that there was no precedent for the simultaneous discussion of two agenda items; moreover such a procedure would only lead to confusion and would inconvenience the delegations, many of which allocated different agenda items to different members. On the other hand, the Committee was in duty bound to work efficiently and to give each item on its agenda due consideration. Therefore, he appealed for the co-operation of all representatives. He thought that it would be premature at the present time to schedule night meetings, but if it became necessary, he would not hesitate, with the agreement of the Committee, to call such meetings. Another possibility would be to request the General Committee for a postponement of the deadline, should the First Committee feel that it was not able to conclude its work by 15 February. However, he felt that with some effort the Committee could complete its work on all the items on its agenda within the time originally scheduled.

2. Mr. CARAYANNIS (Greece) thanked the Chairman for his explanation and hoped that under his guidance the Committee would be able to devote sufficient time to the discussion of all the items on its agenda. The Greek delegation was particularly glad to hear, if it were not possible to finish all items by the closing date of the session, the Chairman would seek a postponement of that date.

AGENDA ITEM 22

Regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments; conclusion of an international convention (treaty) on the reduction of armaments and the prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other weapons of mass destruction: report of the Disarmament Commission (A/3366, A/3470, A/C.1/783, A/C.1/784, A/C.1/L.160, A/C.1/L.161) (*continued*)

3. Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom) said that, although he was speaking as a newcomer, he was well aware of the complexity of the disarmament problem. The people of the United Kingdom wished for a secure peace—the removal of the threat of war and the reduction of the burden of armaments—and he stood ready to do everything to advance that cause.

4. While some must be disappointed at the meagre progress made in disarmament, it could not be expected that a problem which so directly affected the vital interests of all States could be resolved easily or in the atmosphere of the “cold war”. Disarmament required at least a modicum of trust, and it was difficult to believe that without such a minimum of trust any agreement would ever be signed, or, if signed, would long endure. It was to be hoped that progress in the discussions would in itself contribute to increased confidence between States. Any disarmament proposals, however, should take into account the present state of the world.

5. Despite the complexity of the problem, he felt that since 1955 there had been certain causes for encouragement in the field of disarmament. It seemed to him as if the five members of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission were at long last on the same wave-length. Yet differences of view still existed and occasional lapses were made into the vocabulary of the cold war, as exemplified by the speech of the representative of the USSR at the previous meeting. Nevertheless, there was now general agreement among the members of the Sub-Committee on the levels to which the armed forces of the great Powers should be reduced during the first phase of a disarmament plan.

6. There had also been some progress towards an understanding on the objectives of nuclear disarmament, as indicated by the absence in recent talks of the slogan “ban the bomb”. Instead, there was now a more realistic recognition that the goals of such disarmament were to avoid a worldwide nuclear arms race, to guard the health of present and future generations from radiation hazards and to hasten the day when nuclear material could be devoted to peaceful purposes only.

7. However, with reference to the Soviet Union proposals of 17 November 1956 (A/3366), which included the complete destruction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the withdrawal of those weapons from national armaments, and the assertion in the Soviet proposals of 10 May 1955 that there were possibilities beyond the reach of international control for organizing the clandestine manufacture of atomic and hydrogen weapons (DC/71, annex 15, p. 23), he could not help but ask whether the Soviet Union would be willing to destroy all of its nuclear weapons merely on the basis of an assertion by the United States or the United Kingdom that their nuclear stockpiles had been liquidated. That point had, unfortuna-

tely, not been clarified by the Soviet Union representative in his speech at the 821st meeting. And it was precisely that question, and not any retreat by the West, that was responsible for the slow progress made on nuclear disarmament. It would be helpful, therefore, if the Soviet Union representative explained exactly how much control could, in his opinion, be effectively attained in the nuclear field, with regard to both past and future production of fissionable material and nuclear weapons.

8. Some progress had also been made during 1956, as regards control. On that point, however, he had been surprised to hear the representative of the Soviet Union state that his Government had been the first to make proposals concerning international control (821st meeting, para. 42). A study of the records showed precisely the opposite; for, after years of patient explanation by the Western Powers of their own position with regard to the problem, the Soviet Government appeared now to have acknowledged that no disarmament treaty would be worthwhile without effective international control, that the control organization must be recruited and in position before disarmament began, and that it must have access to the objects of control throughout the whole disarmament process. It seemed, furthermore, that the USSR was now even prepared to visualize a control organization with an aerial component, even though the question of aerial inspection had been hedged round with limitations and obscurities in the Soviet proposals of 17 November 1956. In those proposals, the Soviet Government had indicated its willingness to examine the question of aerial inspection in a limited area in Europe (A/3366, para. 27). Did that mean that the Soviet Union had in fact accepted the principle of aerial inspection as a necessary part of an effective international control system? Secondly, would the introduction of aerial inspection in a limited area lead eventually to its operation on a world scale? He would indeed welcome any amplification of the Soviet views on those and the other unresolved questions, particularly on the question of how the USSR proposed to ensure that the disarmament control organization would not be afflicted with the veto problems of the Security Council.

9. He recalled that, during the tenth session (801st meeting), his delegation had directed attention to two alternative approaches: (1) a comprehensive disarmament plan including all conventional and nuclear weapons that could be controlled; (2) a partial plan providing for those measures of adequately safeguarded disarmament that were feasible under present conditions. Both approaches had been mentioned in Assembly resolution 914 (X) of 16 December 1955. There had been, he believed, a shift of opinion in the Disarmament Commission in July 1956 in favour of seeking some limited approach which would enable disarmament to begin. His Government stood ready to participate in a plan of either type. In the case of full-scale disarmament, his Government still felt that the Franco-British plan, as revised and amplified on 19 March 1956 (DC/83, annex 2), remained the best outline yet conceived for comprehensive disarmament. In that connexion, he drew the attention of the Committee to annex 8 of the third report of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission (DC/83) which dealt in detail with the type of control organization required for such a plan.

10. However, if the view prevailed that there was a simpler way to get disarmament started, the United Kingdom would be glad to explore the possibilities. He stressed two conditions in that regard: first, even partial disarmament must be accompanied by an agreement on a control system adequate to ensure the carrying out by all States of the obligations laid down in the plan; secondly, if the plan was to be applied in the near future, States could not be expected to deprive themselves of the weapons on which they relied most to deter aggression. A start in disarmament could undoubtedly be made under present world conditions; but for full-scale reductions in both conventional and nuclear weapons, it was necessary to rely on such a plan as the Franco-British proposal, which provided for step-by-step progress in disarmament and in removing political tensions.

11. Turning to the United States proposals (A/C.1/783), he found in them a fresh attempt to find a limited approach to the problem of disarmament. His Government would give those proposals careful consideration. Detailed discussion could be carried on more fruitfully in the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee than in the First Committee. He hoped that the discussions in those two bodies would be soon resumed.

12. The most useful task which the First Committee could perform at present would be to clarify the questions to which the Sub-Committee should direct its attention in 1957. In that connexion, the United Kingdom offered the following suggestions, having in mind three main points: conventional armaments, experiments in control, and the problem of nuclear test explosions.

13. First, having agreed on the force levels to be achieved at the end of the first stage of reduction, the Sub-Committee should now turn to the question of reductions in conventional armaments. The United Kingdom, he recalled, had submitted a paper on that question on 21 May 1954 (DC/53, annex 3), with the suggestion that efforts should be made to agree on which weapons should be prohibited and which should be limited under a disarmament treaty. That matter had never been discussed in detail. Yet, it was clear that reductions in military manpower without reductions in weapons, or measures to limit or prohibit nuclear weapons without limitation on and controls over conventional weapons, would not afford security.

14. Under the Franco-British plan, the production and use of nuclear weapons would eventually be banned. Similarly, all weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and bacterial weapons, would be prohibited. But there were other weapons, not within the nuclear category, which were not less menacing than nuclear weapons. For instance, the United States had now proposed that projectiles entering outer space should be internationally supervised and should be exclusively devoted to scientific and peaceful purposes (A/C.1/783, para. 11). That would, in fact, be tantamount to banning intercontinental ballistic missiles, provided that an adequate control system could be agreed upon. The United Kingdom agreed that that question should be urgently studied. Events had shown how the atomic weapons devised in 1946 had been rapidly out-dated by new and more powerful weapons. Had the world taken united action in 1945 and 1946, it might have prevented the development of atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons. Today, there was still an opportunity to agree on banning the new intercon-

tinental ballistic missiles while they were still in the development stage.

15. Another weapon of a particularly menacing nature and distinctly an offensive weapon, the long-range submarine capable of launching atomic rockets, could not be left uncontrolled in any disarmament programme banning the atomic bomb. It would also be necessary to include military aircraft, warships, armoured vehicles, guns of all types, flame-throwers, rockets and other weapons. The Sub-Committee should study all those problems.

16. Secondly, the Sub-Committee should give priority to resolving the outstanding questions of control. Theoretical discussions of the problem should be supplemented by practical experiments. The recent proposal of the Soviet Union for aerial inspection in an area 800 kilometres east and west of the dividing line in Europe (A/3366, para. 27) was a far cry from President Eisenhower's "open skies" plan (DC/71, annex 17). Nevertheless, the Sub-Committee might usefully search for mutually agreed areas where tests of control and inspection techniques could be made, including the proposal advanced by Mr. Bulganin, Prime Minister of the USSR, concerning ground posts at strategic centres to prevent surprise attack (DC/71, annex 15, pp. 24-25).

17. Thirdly, the United Kingdom suggested that the Sub-Committee should explore the possibilities for an agreement on the limitation of nuclear test explosions, either as part of a disarmament plan or separately. While the United Kingdom preferred to have the limitation and prohibition of such tests included in a comprehensive disarmament agreement, it was ready, in the absence of a disarmament agreement, to consider the possibility of limiting tests in consultation with the Governments concerned. Great public anxiety had been caused by scientific reports about the possible effects on health of nuclear test explosions, and the Sub-Committee should study the problem in the coming year.

18. The above suggestions, Mr. Noble said, had been offered in the hope that they, together with other ideas emerging from the present discussion, would be referred to the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee for further study in 1957. His delegation would continue to search for a disarmament agreement which would provide peace and security for all nations.

19. Mr. VAN LANGENHOVE (Belgium) said that he would not comment in detail on the statements and proposals made by three of the members of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission until he had thoroughly studied them. For the present, he would limit himself to some general observations on the present state of the subject, which had become increasingly complicated.

20. Reviewing the work on disarmament in 1956, he observed that the first part of the year had been taken up by a long series of Sub-Committee meetings in London and a thorough discussion in the Disarmament Commission. However, during the second part of the year, there had been no meetings of the Sub-Committee, and the Commission itself had held only a brief meeting at which its report to the Assembly had been adopted (A/3470). There had been, however, another development on disarmament which had taken place outside the Commission and Sub-Committee. That was the statement on 17 November 1956 by Mr. Bulganin, Prime Minister

of the Soviet Union (A/3366), addressed to Mr. Eisenhower, President of the United States, Mr. Mollet, Prime Minister of France, and Sir Anthony Eden, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Although the Soviet statement had been made at the height of the Hungarian and Middle East crises and had been phrased in threatening tones, suggesting more a diversionary purpose than a desire to deal with the disarmament question, it contained, with regard to the latter, elements which the Assembly should study. The USSR representative had in fact devoted an important part of his speech at the 821st meeting to the Soviet proposals of 17 November.

21. In the light of the statements made by three members of the Sub-Committee, there was, he believed, a *rapprochement* with regard to the question of the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments. However, with regard to the two other aspects of the question, the problem of control and the question of nuclear weapons, great difficulties and divergencies still existed. While the Soviet Union accepted the principle of control, it had refused, until now, to discuss the Western proposals dealing with the duties and powers of the control organization. The Western Powers, on the other hand, considered that the USSR proposal for ground observation posts and other measures was not sufficient to ensure adequate control, particularly since it did not provide for any supervision over industrial enterprises which could be easily turned to military production. Moreover, the USSR plan did not provide for control over stockpiles outside the military establishments, nor did it accept the Western proposal that each stage of disarmament should depend on the satisfactory completion of the preceding stage. The Western Powers rightly considered that, in order to avoid the danger of a surprise attack, the inspection system should include aerial survey. The limited area proposed by the Soviet Union for aerial inspection deprived such inspection of most of its value. In order to be effective, aerial surveys should apply to those areas where it would be most useful.

22. With regard to nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union's continued adherence to the policy of mere prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons was an unrealistic position; a commitment on the part of a State not to use those weapons would only be a symbolic gesture because it would lack all guarantees of implementation. To agree to the Soviet proposal not only for the cessation of nuclear weapons production but also for the destruction of existing stockpiles under present conditions when it was impossible to achieve effective control over such agreement, would be not only useless, but dangerous.

23. In regard to the Soviet statement on 17 November to the effect that it did not take over all of Western Europe after the Second World War or at a subsequent time because of its devotion to the principle of peaceful coexistence, he stated that the real reason might be found in the deterrent effect of the atomic weapon. To ban the atomic weapons prior to the establishment of effective international control — which was at present technically impossible — would increase the danger of aggression by encouraging a potential aggressor to commit such an act with impunity.

24. Despite the basic difficulties encountered, efforts should continue to be made to achieve agreements that were possible in present circumstances. The United States proposals (A/C.1/783) indicated new avenues of

approach which could be used at the present time without running into insurmountable obstacles.

25. The question of experimental nuclear explosions should also be approached in the same spirit. He recalled that Mr. Moch had analysed in the Disarmament Commission the Soviet proposal for a pure and simple prohibition of such tests and had shown how complex and difficult the matter was, while indicating ways by which a solution could be reached. Mr. van Langenhove believed that, as an immediate and preliminary measure one could consider the suggestion of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway for previous notification and registration of experimental nuclear explosions (598th plenary meeting). Such a step might lead to an agreement by which the nuclear Powers would accept a limit on the volume of radiation caused by the test explosions. While that proposal was limited in scope, it was practical in nature and feasible at present.

26. Public opinion fully understood that the disarmament problem could not be solved by high-sounding declarations. It was aware of the complexities of the problem of disarmament, and it realized that the political situation determined the solution of the problem. Sincere supporters of disarmament recognized the need for proceeding from one successful stage to the next. That was the only realistic approach to the question of disarmament.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that there were no more speakers on his list and inquired whether any representatives would be prepared to speak at the present or at the following meeting.

28. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that his delegation along with others expected that the Member States which had been specifically entrusted with the disarmament question would assist in the discussion of that question in the First Committee by expressing their views first. The Committee had already heard statements from three members of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission, and it would be helpful if the other two members of the Sub-Committee and the other members of the Disarmament Commission would make their statements at an early stage.

29. Mr. MOCH (France) said that two members of the disarmament Sub-Committee who had not yet par-

ticipated in the present discussion were Canada and France. However, the right to speak freely had a corollary—the right to speak when one had something to say and at a time of his choice.

30. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that his request was not with regard to future proposals on the disarmament question, but to the work during the past year which had preceded the present debate. He added that statements from members of the Disarmament Commission in that respect would assist the Committee in its work.

31. The CHAIRMAN announced that, as there were no speakers for the afternoon meeting, that meeting would be cancelled. He proposed that the list of speakers be closed at 6 p.m. Wednesday, 16 January.

32. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that, in view of the importance of the question under discussion, delegations would wish to have time for preparation after having heard the statements embodying various proposals. The USSR delegation believed that it would be premature to decide to close the list of speakers at 6 p.m. Wednesday, and would, therefore, propose that the decision to close the list should not be taken for the time being.

33. Mr. MOCH (France) agreed with the representative of the USSR that it would be too early to decide on closing the list of speakers. He pointed out that so far only four delegations had made statements. Moreover, representatives would like to have some additional time for further preparations and for consultations with their Governments.

34. The CHAIRMAN observed that he had made his earlier suggestion in order to expedite the work of the Committee. In view of the objections raised by the representatives of the USSR and France he was quite prepared to postpone the closing of the speakers list until Thursday, 17 January.

35. Mr. LODGE (United States of America) said that the Chairman had made a wise decision in keeping the list of speakers open a little longer. As the Chairman had correctly assumed, the lack of speakers did not indicate any lack of interest in the question under discussion.

The meeting rose at 12.5 p.m.