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Chairman: Mr. Djatal ABDUH (Iran).

AGENDA ITEM 24

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 (A/3630 and Corr.1, A/3657, A/3674/Rev.1, A/3685; A/C.1/793, A/C.1/L.174, A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.176/Rev.2, A/C.1/L.177, A/C.1/L.178/Rev.1) (continued):

- (a) Report of the Disarmament Commission;
- (b) Expansion of the membership of the Disarmament Commission and of its Sub-Committee;
- (c) Collective action to inform and enlighten the peoples of the world as to the dangers of the armaments race, and particularly as to the destructive effects of modern weapons;
- (d) Discontinuance under international control of tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons

1. Mr. GROMYKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted that all the delegations speaking in the general debate in the General Assembly had quite rightly emphasized the importance of the disarmament problem. The continuing armaments race, which affected all countries and all peoples and was increasing the danger of a new war, had everywhere caused an unprecedented increase in military expenditure and, in most countries, had led to inflation, higher prices and heavier taxes. When delegations called for a stop to the armaments race, they were merely reflecting the demand of the peoples of the world, who were aware of the dangerous consequences of international rivalry in the production of weapons of mass destruction.

2. But mere statements on the need to put an end to the arms race and to achieve agreement on disarmament were not enough. Words must be followed by

deeds. The statements made at the current session nevertheless showed that by no means all States were in fact seeking to stop the arms race. The Governments of some countries, in particular those which had organized the North Atlantic bloc, had remained true to their old policy of holding the world in a state of tension and preventing the United Nations from making progress towards disarmament. As far back as 1945 and 1946, it had become clear that the Western Powers were seeking not disarmament but an intensification of the armaments race. That had been evident in the establishment of numerous United States military bases on the territory of other states, in the remilitarization of West Germany and in the efforts made to prevent by all means any understanding on any aspect of armaments, whether with regard to conventional armaments or to atomic and hydrogen weapons. Since that time, the situation had only grown more alarming.

3. Responsibility for the lack of any agreement on disarmament rested with the Western Powers, which had made the arms race, the setting-up of aggressive military blocs and the "cold war" the basis of their foreign policy. The delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom and France would doubtless try again, as they had before, to shift to the Soviet Union the blame for their own faults. The device was not new; it had been used by those who had paved the way for Hitlerite aggression in Europe. The United States obviously had no serious intentions of facilitating agreement on disarmament. It could not be considered accidental that both in 1946 and at the present time the representatives of that country spoke mainly of "regulation of armaments" rather than of disarmament.

4. Western propaganda had distorted the true nature of the disarmament talks and the positions of the States concerned, including that of the Soviet Union. For that reason it would be well if the members of the First Committee were to analyse the true position of the parties to the disarmament talks, as a means, not only of clarifying the differences in the views of the parties to the negotiations, but mainly of throwing light on the prospects of arriving at agreement on at least some, if not all, phases of disarmament. The General Assembly must, in full realization of its great responsibility, have an opportunity to speak on the question of disarmament.

5. With regard to conventional armaments and armed forces, the Western Powers had from the very beginning of the disarmament talks stressed the need for reduction. They had made no secret of the fact that they were interested in a radical and urgent reduction of the Soviet armed forces, which, according to them, presented a threat to their security. At the same time they had been reluctant to agree to a prohibition of atomic weapons on the grounds that they

were in need of those weapons to balance the military power of the Soviet Union, which, according to them, possessed a definite superiority in conventional armaments and armed forces. From the very outset of the disarmament talks, however, it had become clear that those statements were only a pretext to prevent agreement on disarmament. The same tactics were still being used.

6. About five years previously, the Western Powers had suggested that the forces of the USSR, the United States and China should be reduced to between 1 million and 1.5 million men, while those of the United Kingdom and France would be reduced to 650,000 men. The Soviet Union had agreed, but the Western Powers had then gone back on their suggestion. Later, the United States, the United Kingdom and France had suggested forces of 2.5 million men for the USSR, the United States and China, and 750,000 men for the United Kingdom and France, saying that that was merely the first stage of reduction and that subsequent steps could be agreed upon later. They had not, however, indicated what those reductions would be or when they were to take place. They had obviously hoped to achieve a one-sided solution advantageous to them and detrimental to the security of the Soviet Union. That had been all the clearer in that they had been reluctant to accept any proposal designed to bring about the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons.

7. The Western Powers had continued to insist on those high levels for a considerable period of time. The acceptance of those levels would not, however, have led to any reduction in armed forces and would even have resulted in an increase in the armed forces of some Powers. Then, at the last series of meetings of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission, the United States Government had suggested ^{1/} the following figures: at the first stage of reduction, 2.5 million men for the USSR and the United States, 750,000 for the United Kingdom and France; at the second stage 2.1 million men for the USSR and the United States and 700,000 for the United Kingdom and France; at the third stage, 1.7 million men for the USSR and the United States and 650,000 for the United Kingdom and France. When, however, the Soviet Union had accepted those levels, the Western Powers, while not going so far as once again to retract their proposal, had attached so many preliminary conditions to it that it had become void of any meaning. Moreover, they were now making no reference to the prohibition of atomic weapons.

8. The Government of the Soviet Union continued, on the other hand, to believe that an agreement which would be in the interests of peace should provide not merely for the reduction of conventional armaments but for the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons as well. To help break the stalemate, the USSR had endeavoured to reach an understanding with the Western Powers on a reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces alone and in 1956 had presented a proposal to that effect to the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission (DC/83, annex 5). Its efforts had nevertheless proved of no avail because of the opposition of the Western Powers,

which, after having insisted that the question of conventional armaments must be kept apart from the problem of atomic weapons, had switched over to the opposite side of the argument, saying that they were in search of a comprehensive disarmament programme which would deal simultaneously with both conventional and atomic weapons. Those shifts in attitude had occurred several times, and no agreement had been possible because the Western Powers had no real desire to reach an agreement.

9. In the course of the negotiations a proposal had also been made for a reduction of conventional armaments on the basis of lists relating solely to the armaments to be reduced, it being understood that an agreement could be reached later concerning corresponding reductions in armed forces. The Soviet Union had replied that it was prepared to support that proposal, which, after all, would lead not to an increase but to a reduction of armaments. However, once the Soviet Union had agreed, the Western Powers had, for some unknown reason, ceased to attach the same importance to their proposal.

10. The important problem of reducing military budgets had likewise been discussed on numerous occasions in the course of the negotiations. The figures of 10 per cent and 15 per cent had been put forward, but here too the discussion had proved fruitless as the Western Powers had had no wish whatever to reduce military budgets.

11. The Soviet Union had, on the other hand, continued to insist on the need to reduce armed forces and conventional armaments and had presented numerous proposals to that effect. Its most recent proposals (A/C.1/793) embodied the same figures which the representative of the United States had put forward at the last series of meetings of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission. The adoption of those figures in conjunction with urgent measures with regard to nuclear weapons, including commitments by the various States not to use such weapons, would mark an important step towards settling the disarmament problem and eliminating the threat of a new war.

12. There could be no doubt that rivalry in the manufacture of atomic and hydrogen weapons was more important than the race in conventional armaments as a factor in increasing the threat of a new war, particularly at a time when the destructive power of thermo-nuclear weapons was becoming greater and greater and when inter-continental rockets could reach any point on the globe. That problem had not, however, been solved, and atomic weapons had not yet been prohibited. What was worse, there were even people who praised atomic weapons and saw in them a guarantee of peace.

13. Ever since the United Nations had been dealing with disarmament, the Soviet Union, faithful to its policy of peace, had been insisting on the need for a complete and unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons, on their removal from the armaments of States and on the destruction of existing stocks. Since 1946 it had advocated an international convention on the total banning and the elimination of atomic weapons and the destruction of existing stocks as well as on the use of atomic energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. Inasmuch as certain circles had at that time been counting on their monopoly in the atomic weapons field, the Western Powers did not accept the proposal. Later,

^{1/} See document DC/SC.1/PV.124.

the Soviet Government had proposed that the States should undertake not to use atomic weapons, for such an undertaking would have contributed greatly to reducing international tension and dispelling the threat of an atomic war. Bent upon a nuclear and thermo-nuclear armaments race, the Western Powers had rejected that proposal also. At the Conference of the Heads of Government of the four great Powers, held at Geneva in July 1955, the Soviet Government had proposed that the Powers possessing nuclear weapons should pledge themselves not to be the first to use them (DC/71, annex 18). There was scarcely any need to say that a pledge of that kind would have solved the problem of prohibiting atomic and hydrogen weapons. But the Western Powers had refused to support that proposal.

14. The Soviet Union had proposed at the present session of the General Assembly (A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1) that States possessing nuclear weapons should repudiate their use and conclude an agreement to that effect for a period of five years on the understanding that the question would be re-examined at the end of that period. That minimum and, so to speak, experimental step could be accomplished easily, since it involved no threat to the security of the parties to the agreement. There was no reason to doubt that such a provisional commitment would improve the international atmosphere and facilitate the settlement of other aspects of the disarmament question.

15. The Soviet Union had submitted numerous other proposals attesting its concern to reach an agreement on the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, but the propaganda of the Western Powers and of the United States in particular had tried to give the impression that possession of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons by the Western Powers would offset the Soviet Union's alleged military superiority in armed forces. Those completely unfounded allegations had been coupled with the absurd and aggressive theory that the Western Powers needed atomic and hydrogen weapons as a "deterrent". That theory was a pretext for intensifying the production of nuclear weapons, facilitating the stockpiling of United States atomic bombs on the territory of other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and placing obstacles in the way of any measures designed to put an end to the armaments race.

16. For some time there had also been an attempt to show that the danger of atomic weapons could be reduced by concentrating on the production of so-called tactical weapons, but that theory, which the NATO leaders had raised to the status of a "doctrine", was likewise false and was nothing more than an attempt to throw people off guard. No matter what their destructive power, nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons continued none the less to be weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the output of those devices was continuing at an accelerated rate. Thus, it was more than ever indispensable that an agreement be concluded on the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, or at least that the first specific steps be taken in that direction without delay. To maintain that nuclear weapons would be the good fortune of some and the misfortune of others was to lie to the world, for the nations whose statesmen praised those weapons would not be the last to suffer the horrors of an atomic war.

17. The Soviet Union stood for the unconditional

prohibition of nuclear weapons. The promoters of the armaments race were resorting to new methods to create the illusion that they, too, were in favour of taking steps towards atomic disarmament. About two years ago, the Western Powers had declared their willingness not to use newly-produced fissionable materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons. The delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom were still praising that proposal although, in the opinion of the Soviet Union, it did nothing towards furthering an agreement, for to discontinue the production of fissionable materials for military purposes in no way prevented the manufacture of nuclear weapons from materials already produced. Accordingly, the number of atomic and hydrogen bombs, instead of diminishing, would increase, given the present scope of production of fissionable materials. Furthermore, the proposal still did not provide for prohibition of nuclear weapons and consequently had the effect of legalizing their use, thus making it more difficult to reach agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and their elimination from armaments. For those reasons, the Soviet Government had told the Western Powers that it could not endorse a proposal of that kind which would enable a potential aggressor to use atomic weapons and thus increase the danger of atomic war. The claim that the proposal represented a step forward in settling the problem of nuclear weapons was totally unfounded and was intended merely to mislead public opinion.

18. In order to prevent agreement on the complete and unconditional prohibition of nuclear weapons, the Western Powers further proposed that those weapons should be outlawed except for purposes of self-defence (DC/113, annex 5), it being understood that the State possessing nuclear weapons should be the judge of when to use them. That would enable a potential aggressor to unleash an atomic war on the pretext that it was safeguarding its security or exercising its right of self-defence. History showed that aggressors had invoked that pretext more than once. In lieu of that proposal to legalize the use of nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union had proposed that they should be outlawed except in cases where they might be used to repel aggression by virtue of a decision of the Security Council. Although the Soviet proposal was fully in conformity with the provisions of the Charter, it had been rejected by the Western Powers because it removed all loop-holes for a potential aggressor.

19. The Soviet Union was now asking the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France to come to an honest and mutually acceptable agreement. More than ever before, peace was indivisible, and the security of the Western countries as well as that of other countries should be borne in mind. The more weapons of mass destruction there were, the greater the danger of an all-out war.

20. The Soviet Government favoured a radical solution of the disarmament problem that would result in a substantial reduction in armed forces, the complete and unconditional prohibition of nuclear weapons and their elimination from the armaments of nations. However, since the Western Powers were continually blocking an agreement on so comprehensive a programme, the Soviet Government was of the opinion that an agreement should first be reached on partial measures. The Western Powers had accepted that view. The Soviet Government had on several occasions proposed certain

partial measures of disarmament and had submitted to the current session of the General Assembly a memorandum containing concrete proposals dealing with nuclear weapons and conventional armaments (A/C.1/793). He would recall some of those proposals in order to reply to some delegations which had attempted during the general debate to distort the Soviet position.

21. People all over the world were clamouring for an end to tests of nuclear weapons. Parliamentary and government leaders in scores of countries with different political systems understood and supported that demand. The representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Lloyd, maintained that the Soviet Union was opposed to control over the enforcement of an agreement (685th plenary meeting, para.60). Actually, the United Kingdom Government was well aware that the Soviet Union itself had proposed the establishment of special posts in the territories of the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom and in the Pacific area to ensure enforcement of the agreement. In line with their usual tactics, the Western Powers had lost interest in such control once the Soviet proposal had been submitted.

22. Like the god Janus, the policy of the Western Powers was two-faced: to meet the demands of the people, there should be negotiations, but, in order not to lose the tremendous profits which the arms race created for the capitalist monopolies, those negotiations must not be successful. That policy did not change, and the opening proceedings of the current session illustrated that fact. Nevertheless, it would be wrong for the General Assembly to conclude that it could do nothing and let the matter go at that. It must attempt to settle the problem.

23. The question of the discontinuance of tests of nuclear weapons was the easiest to settle, and its solution would have the most far-reaching consequences. Apart from removing a serious threat to mankind, it would serve to clear the international atmosphere by promoting a restoration of mutual confidence; it would make it easier to resolve the other problems of disarmament; and it would put an end to the production of increasingly destructive nuclear weapons.

24. Many delegations had spoken in favour of an immediate and unconditional prohibition of nuclear-weapons tests. The Soviet Union delegation hoped that still other delegations would take the same position, since the question concerned all countries. The United Kingdom and France were largely responsible for the failure of the negotiations on the subject. Some British political leaders had openly stated that their country should try to catch up with other countries in the manufacture of atomic and hydrogen weapons. Many representatives were discussing various aspects of disarmament, but it would be better to single out a few specific measures, those easiest to agree on, as would be the case for an agreement on the immediate discontinuance of nuclear tests. Obviously, the Soviet Union could not unilaterally decide to end the tests without placing itself in a position of inferiority and jeopardizing its security. The Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom should abandon the tests simultaneously. An agreement to discontinue the tests for a period of two or three years, as proposed by the Soviet delegation, would be a substantial step forward.

There was no excuse for further procrastination in settling that problem.

25. The lack of agreement on control which the Western Powers were using as an excuse to block agreement on the points he had just reviewed was simply a device for preventing agreement on ending the arms race and prohibiting nuclear weapons.

26. The aerial photography plan would not solve the problem of reducing armaments and prohibiting nuclear weapons. Its purpose, as President Eisenhower had said, was originally to prevent surprise attack, but it was not an adequate safeguard even in that regard. Would States feel safe with foreign aircraft flying over their territory? The opposite was more likely in the existing atmosphere of mutual suspicion, which was being freely exploited by certain circles in the United States. The system of aerial photography would be applicable only in an atmosphere of international confidence. But what would be the sense of it in that case? Aerial photography could not serve as a means of controlling disarmament; it could only be used for military intelligence.

27. The first step in creating international confidence was to expand economic relations between nations by removing artificial trade barriers. Another step would be to put an end to the war propaganda which was being carried on by a number of countries and gave evidence of their aggressive intentions. When confidence was restored among nations, and particularly between the Soviet Union and the United States, the question of control would assume a different aspect.

28. A comparison of the present position of certain Western Powers on control or disarmament with that of the United Kingdom or France in the League of Nations showed that history repeated itself. The people of the world, and the people of Europe in particular, had paid a heavy price for the obstructionism of those two countries. There was nothing new in the Western Powers' idea of control, and it was very surprising to hear the French representative describe his country's disarmament policy in the League of Nations as a positive experience (700th plenary meeting).

29. All that did not mean that steps should not be taken to prevent a surprise attack on one State by another; measures of that kind should be co-ordinated with specific action for the purpose of reducing armaments and prohibiting nuclear weapons. Although the Soviet Union had taken a rather negative attitude concerning the aerial photography plan, it had nevertheless submitted a proposal to establish aerial photography zones in Europe and the Far East (DC/112, annex 7). When, however, that proposal had been submitted, the Western Powers had considered that aerial photography would be more appropriately employed in the Arctic. In the Soviet delegation's opinion, that would be completely meaningless.

30. The foregoing considerations would be enough to show that the position taken by the Western Powers, and especially by the United States, made a disarmament agreement impossible. In support of his argument, however, he would like to draw attention to another aspect of the matter. The Western Powers had stated that an agreement on disarmament could not be reached until serious international problems such as the unification of Germany, the Middle Eastern ques-

tion, the problems of the Far East and so on had been resolved. It was interesting to note that that question had been raised when the Soviet Union had agreed to begin with an agreement on conventional armaments, as the Western Powers had asked. The position taken by the Western Powers was, in fact, the real reason why the international problems in question had not been settled.

31. The question of Germany was an example. The Western Powers had worked to remilitarize West Germany, which they had drawn into the aggressive NATO bloc, and they were making every effort to accentuate the division of the country. East Germany was moving in a totally different direction. It was in favour of a relaxation of tension in Europe, the establishment of a system of collective security, a rapprochement between the two German States, resistance to militarization, disarmament, the prohibition of nuclear weapons and the withdrawal of foreign troops from German territory. Recently, the Government of the German Democratic Republic had proposed the creation of a German confederation and a gradual rapprochement between the two States.

32. The Soviet Union had always considered that the German question should be solved by the Germans themselves and that its solution was possible only if the two parts of the country were allowed gradually to come closer together. The Soviet Government had stated more than once that it would not take part in any conferences on Germany whose purpose was to prolong the existence of the problem. The Adenauer Government had recently concluded an agreement with the United States under which the United States, in order to support Adenauer's demands concerning the German question, was practically obliged to block all steps towards disarmament. Adenauer, in his turn, invoked the lack of a disarmament agreement in order to justify his policy of remilitarization and the transformation of his country into an atomic base for NATO.

33. The situation was similar in the Middle East. The United States Government and the whole American propaganda machine incessantly repeated that Syria represented a threat to its neighbours, in contradiction to the statements of all the Arab countries. That was not the first time that the Soviet Union had been accused of infiltrating into the Middle East. The truth was that those who attributed such intrigues to the Soviet Union were themselves pursuing in the Middle East a colonialist policy intended to deprive the Arab countries of their independence, set them against each other and exploit their natural resources.

34. The USSR wanted the Arab States to remain independent. It was opposed to any foreign intervention in their domestic affairs and to the policy of drawing them into aggressive military blocs, for such a policy constituted a threat to their freedom and to the maintenance of peace in that part of the world. It was in the Soviet Union's interest that peace should reign in those countries and that they should be independent. The Soviet Union's attitude did not in any way prevent the Arab countries from maintaining good relations with the Western countries. The Soviet Union was not to blame if relations between the United States, the United Kingdom and France, on the one hand, and the Arab States on the other, were strained. To improve the situation in the Middle East it was necessary to renounce the policy of force and of the threat of force

and to stop all intervention in the domestic affairs of Arab States. If the Western Powers adopted the same attitude as the USSR, there would be no more tension. The attitude of the Arab States themselves would be of decisive importance, as Egypt had demonstrated yesterday and Syria was demonstrating today.

35. Thus, just as in the case of Germany, the Western Powers doomed all attempts to reach an agreement on disarmament to failure by stating that such an agreement must depend on the settlement of the Middle Eastern question. If progress towards disarmament was desired, then efforts should be directed to that end, and the attention of the United Nations should not be diverted to one or another entirely unrelated problem.

36. How should the discussion of disarmament at the present session of the General Assembly be terminated? The Soviet Union delegation believed that it was not enough to adopt resolutions, as was desired by some delegations which wished to prolong a useless discussion indefinitely. What was needed was an effort to reach a specific agreement on one or more separate questions. The Soviet delegation had submitted proposals dealing with partial measures. It had not made the solution of simple questions dependent on the settlement of complex problems unrelated to disarmament. It proceeded from the assumption that if a general agreement could not be reached, an agreement in principle, even if only on one or two questions, would greatly facilitate the solution of the other problems.

37. It was important in particular:

(a) To put an immediate halt to the testing of atomic and hydrogen weapons, even if for a period of only two or three years, and not to make an agreement on that point dependent on an agreement regarding the other aspects of disarmament;

(b) To reach an agreement by which States would undertake not to use nuclear weapons, and to conclude a temporary agreement to that effect, for a period of five years, for example, after which the question would be reconsidered;

(c) To reduce the armed forces of the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France which were stationed on German territory by one-third or in some other agreed proportion, and likewise to reduce the armed forces of those Powers stationed in the territory of the countries that were members of NATO or signatories to the Warsaw Treaty;

(d) To consider the question of eliminating military bases on foreign territory and, first of all, to determine by common agreement which of those bases could be eliminated during the first stage of the implementation of disarmament measures;

(e) To reach an agreement by which States possessing nuclear weapons would refrain from setting up units armed with atomic weapons beyond their national frontiers and from establishing stockpiles of nuclear weapons there (in that connexion, he recalled the proposals made in May 1957 by the Polish People's Republic and the Czechoslovak Republic, which were ready to renounce the manufacture and stocking of atomic weapons in their territory if the two German States undertook to do the same);

(f) To reach an agreement on the establishment of control posts on a basis of reciprocity.

38. An agreement on those points or on some of them would greatly serve the cause of a lasting peace. The methods employed in the disarmament negotiations would, of course, have to be modified. Among other things, the discussion of the question should no longer be confined to a body made up of five members, four of which belonged to the aggressive NATO bloc and made every effort to prevent a solution of the problem. The Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee should be enlarged so that the peace-loving countries, which would help to achieve an agreement, could take part in their work.

39. In conclusion, he warned the Committee against the General Assembly's tendency to adopt resolutions whose purpose was to return the question to the Disarmament Commission or its Sub-Committee or which reinforced the position of those who were frustrating the negotiations. He hoped that specific results would be achieved and that the hope of millions of men who were awaiting not words but effective steps would thus be realized.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.