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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;
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- (d) Discontinuance under international control of tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons

1. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) reaffirmed the Peruvian delegation's determination to do its utmost at the current session of the General Assembly to promote agreement among the great Powers on the urgent and vital question of disarmament. The arms race had plunged the world into a state of profound anxiety; it drained the energies of peoples, caused a misuse of their human resources, and removed all hope of a better world for future generations. It was a race towards death, a frustration of all the constructive goals of human beings.

2. The great Powers were faced with the dilemma of maintaining sound economies without falling behind in the arms race. If they decided to continue the arms race, their economies would suffer from a shortage of consumer goods, a deterioration in working conditions and an inflationary trend. For the smaller and less developed countries, the continuing arms race was far more tragic: it eliminated the prospect of any improve-

ment in their standards of living. Statistics showed that two-thirds of the world's population were still living in conditions of poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, and under the threat of premature death. The arms race was preventing the more favoured nations from discharging their ineluctable duty to assist in the development of the less privileged countries.

3. The Peruvian delegation could not accept the argument of the representative of the Soviet Union (867th meeting) that the armaments race was due to the fact that the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States in particular, were preparing for a new war. On the contrary, the United States and its allies had disarmed to the maximum, pursuing a policy not only of peaceful co-existence but of cordial co-operation with the Soviet Union. From the beginning, the United States had offered to share the atomic secret with the Soviet Union. The efforts of its people had been consistently concentrated on harnessing the forces of nature for the good of man and not on conquest. It had entered into a system of defence with the young, emancipated countries of the American continent and had invariably maintained a policy of peaceful co-operation with them. Finally, its foreign policy had initially been one of isolationism, which was the antithesis of imperialism; later, however, it had been forced by changes in the world situation to emerge from its traditional isolationism, having done so for the sake of moral principles and in order to defend democracy, culture and peace. Its new policy had been clarified in the position taken by the late Senator Vandenberg. It had been restated in unequivocal terms by President Eisenhower in presenting his "open skies" proposal (DC/71, annex 17). That proposal had been amplified, as Mr. Lodge had stated (866th meeting), to include inspection of United States bases on foreign soil, provided, of course, that the same inspection could be exercised in Soviet territory. Conclusive evidence of the peaceful policy pursued by the United States had been the action taken by President Eisenhower in the Middle East crisis.

4. The Soviet leaders were perfectly well aware that modern warfare precluded victory for any side; they could not reasonably argue that the United States and its allies were preparing another war. They knew that the *blitzkrieg* doctrine of Clausewitz was obsolete, that war in our time could bring no glorious victory, no territorial gains. Even if a State came into possession of an "ultimate weapon", it could have no guarantee that another State would not develop an equally power or more destructive weapon. Moreover, in a world which had developed intercontinental ballistic missiles, the destruction of victor and vanquished was inevitable. Science uncontrolled by law or morality meant world suicide.

5. The basic cause of the arms race must be sought rather, in the total mistrust which prevailed in the

world, a mistrust which led not only to the accumulation of the so-called "repressive armaments", but to a tendency to try to build up superiority in "preventive armaments" to forestall all possible attack. That concept led to an equally illusory idea that it was possible to establish "psychological supremacy" by winning the scientific and technological war. By wielding that "psychological" power, it was believed that victory could be won without actual fighting and that solutions of the world's problems could be dictated by the victor. If that idea were accepted, it would abolish the conscience of humanity at a stroke. But it was a fallacy and a terrible danger, for it would lead to war. The time had passed when a balance could be achieved in conventional armaments, for the arms race could continue indefinitely under the impetus of unpredictable scientific achievements. It could lead only to greater anxiety and to greater instability until a point was reached at which civilization was in such imminent danger that a halt would have to be called unless the world was prepared complacently to assume responsibility for its total destruction.

6. The arms race could only be halted by a restoration of mutual confidence. That confidence could not be restored by decree or agreement, but only by an objective action constituting a guarantee and symbolizing an attitude of mind. The Soviet Union was in error in believing that there were any subjective guarantees of confidence. There had to be an objective instrument with which to restore confidence and objective proof of willingness to use that instrument for the purpose of negotiating agreement. International confidence would not be built upon words or treaties; it would be established only through action. Therefore, to be effective, any agreement must contain a guarantee of consequential action. That was the essence of international control and that was why Peru had insisted in the Disarmament Commission on the necessity for international control. The Charter of the United Nations had recognized that necessity in establishing the Security Council and the Military Staff Committee. International control was the objective reality which would create confidence. It was a sad commentary on relations between States that international control had been accepted for secondary purposes, such as trade, river and road traffic, yet was being rejected for the paramount purpose of restricting the arms race on which the life or death of the entire human race depended.

7. Mankind no longer believed that prohibition in itself would provide an effective solution to its quest for peace. Its hopes were now bound up with the idea of control, and on that question, which was the acid test of good faith with regard to disarmament, the Soviet Union's attitude had been equivocal and was now definitely negative. In the beginning, control had been rejected on the grounds that it would constitute an infringement of sovereignty. It had been pointed out, however, that no country's sovereignty would be impaired if the provisions for control applied equally to all, and the Soviet Union had finally accepted the principle of control in the form of permanent - though not continuous - inspection. Subsequently, however, it had made prohibition a prior condition of control, thus attempting to separate two ideas which formed an indivisible whole. Later, the Soviet Union had agreed

to control of conventional armaments, but that control had never been precisely defined.

8. The most serious element in the situation was, however, the Soviet Union's attitude towards another type of control - that intended to forestall surprise attack. In 1955, the Prime Minister of the USSR had proposed, in response to President Eisenhower's open skies proposal, ground inspection at strategic points (DC/71, annex 15). At that time the Soviet Union had not completely rejected aerial inspection, but had merely stated that it should be postponed. Since then, however, it had taken a further step backward, declaring that aerial inspection would be merely an instrument of espionage. Its last proposals (A/C.1/793) offered nothing but prohibition without control; the experimental renunciation of use for a period of five years did not present any real guarantee of an effective improvement in the international climate.

9. The situation had some encouraging features, notably the acceptance by the United States of reductions in armed forces below the levels of 2.5 million men for the United States and the Soviet Union and 750,000 for the United Kingdom and France which had been proposed earlier, and the fact that the Soviet Union had accepted control of atomic tests and had reiterated, in a modified form, its proposal with regard to inspection at strategic points.

10. But the situation remained tragic because no agreement had been reached on the crux of the matter, which was the question of control. Perhaps the very gravity of the situation would lead to one last great effort to fulfil the world's hopes by ending the present deadlock.

11. Mr. NISOT (Belgium) said that he would deal only with sub-item (c) of the agenda item and reserved the right to speak on other aspects of the disarmament question later.

12. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium had explained to the General Assembly on 24 September (685th plenary meeting), the Belgian draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1) was inspired by the need to associate the peoples of the world with the efforts of Governments to reach an agreement on the regulation of armaments and on the establishment of international control, without which no effective regulation was possible. The purpose of the action proposed was to enlighten the peoples of the world as to the gravity of their danger and thus to convince them of the need to exert all the pressure within their power to bring about the international agreements on which their survival depended. The draft resolution confined itself to expressing that basic idea and avoided any details which might give rise to mistrust. It was an invitation to rise above controversy in order to study possible courses of action which had not yet been adequately explored.

13. The peoples of the world were entitled to the truth regarding the extent and probability of their danger. The United Nations would be remiss in its duty if it did not assume the task of honestly informing them about those dangers. In the opinion of the Belgian delegation, no delegation would, with regard to the people it represented, take upon itself the responsibility of opposing such a draft, especially since the draft, in requesting only that a study be made, prejudged nothing.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.