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Chairman: Mr. Djalal ABDOH (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.1/174, 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, A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1, A/C.1/L.179/Add.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. MOCH (France) said that the need for an unarmed peace had never been as deeply felt as at present. There had been high hopes before, and profound disappointment after, the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission had come to a deadlock in its London negotiations in 1957.

2. The seventy-one meetings which the Sub-Committee had held over a period of six months had not led to any draft agreement; therefore no agreement could be expected to emerge from a brief discussion among eighty-two delegations. The idea of unanimity on the substance of the problem should therefore be regretfully discarded and a choice should be made.

3. To seek a way out of the existing stalemate by means of simple procedural measures would be dan-

gerous. New steps toward peace could be taken only as a result of careful study by the Governments concerned. Such study would obviously need time and could not be affected by the composition of the Disarmament Commission, the Sub-Committee or any other new organ which might be proposed.

4. For the reasons given, the French delegation, limiting itself to the draft resolutions before the Committee, could not support such innovations. It did not believe that the cause of disarmament would gain by adding two or three members to the Commission since the initial agreement would have to be reached between four States which were already members of it. It therefore continued to favour a composition based on the membership of the Security Council, a body representative of the United Nations.

5. Moreover, the French delegation felt that no useful purpose would be served by increasing the membership of the Sub-Committee on which the four Governments whose initial agreement conditioned all further progress were already represented. The argument of the inequality of representation of East and West carried little weight. What was needed in the Sub-Committee was unanimity, not a majority.

6. Similarly, it could not agree to the tripartite formula proposed by India, in the first place because it was not resigned to consecrating the three-way division of the world, and secondly because the committee thus established could not replace the Powers primarily concerned or impose a course of action upon them.

7. Finally, the French delegation considered that nations had a right to know what the dangers they had to face were. It therefore trusted that the study requested by the Belgian delegation in its draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1) would be recommended unanimously.

8. In the view of the French delegation, three courses of action were open to the General Assembly:

(a) Each of its Members could individually submit its suggestions to the Sub-Committee, which would welcome them, aware as it was that it might have overlooked certain aspects of the problem;

(b) The Assembly, acting collectively, could inspire hope and confidence in the wisdom of man and the will to do all that could reasonably and immediately be done;

(c) Since no unanimous agreement was in sight at the moment, the Assembly should make known the feelings of the United Nations—that is, choose between two approaches and thus take a majority stand. It had been said that such a vote would have no practical effect. That was not certain. He trusted in the ultimate power of world public opinion.

9. The suggestions made in the twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) appeared to the French delegation to be the best and the most likely to bear fruit. It therefore urged the Committee to support the draft by the largest possible majority. Once it had been adopted, the French delegation would continue its permanent efforts to reach understanding and rapprochement.

10. The constants of French policy on the question of disarmament, as seen from the fact that he had been the spokesman for it for six successive years, were the following.

11. First, any disarmament agreement, whether partial or general, must have the unanimous support of the States concerned. Hence, it was imperative that any treaty should, at every stage, increase the security of all parties and not merely that of some to the detriment of others.

12. Secondly, the general increase in security demanded that disarmament, even if partial, should extend to all fields simultaneously. The solution of any problem, if separated from the rest, would modify the relation of forces to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others.

13. Thirdly, current international relations were marked by mistrust. It was futile to seek to establish the causes of that mistrust, for both sides were often responsible. They should be fought, and a minimum of confidence should be restored. Solemn declarations, which could not be checked, were but vain gestures and valueless as long as mistrust existed. They would be superfluous once confidence was restored. Hence, the primary objective was the restoration of confidence, which could be achieved only if each Government was convinced that the others were scrupulously fulfilling their obligations, in other words if there was effective control over the execution of the agreements arrived at. Control was the only generator of confidence.

14. Fourthly, the need to restore confidence imposed limits upon the measure of disarmament which could be achieved at present. France was opposed to uncontrolled disarmament or control without disarmament, since the former did not dissipate doubts and the latter did not consolidate peace. It preferred progressively to carry out such disarmament as at present could be controlled, by stages, each of which would consolidate peace, restore some measure of confidence and make subsequent progress easier.

15. Fifthly, France's ultimate objective was to establish a universal security based on complete disarmament, fully controlled. Pending that final stage, its independence and its freedom must rest on defensive alliances and must not be weakened before total disarmament was achieved. France was therefore prepared to accept global reductions but not regional measures.

16. Those principles had inspired the proposals submitted by the four Western Powers at London on 29 August 1957 (DC/113, annex 5) and the twenty-four-Power draft resolution before the Committee. The representative of the Soviet Union on the Sub-Committee had rejected (DC/113, annex 12), in strong and negative terms, the four-Power proposals to which he (Mr. Moch) had promised (DC/113, annex 13) to reply in the First Committee.

17. Not only had there been no reversal in the Soviet position, as there was in 1954, but the proposals had been subjected to a second attack by the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking to the First Committee (867th meeting), to which he also intended to reply.

18. He would do so without entering into polemics. However, in view of the courteous and cordial relations he enjoyed with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, which remained unaffected even when disagreement between them widened, he felt warranted in drawing attention to certain "subjective" arguments put forward by Mr. Gromyko which belonged more in a propaganda paper than in a statement before the General Assembly.

19. Citing a number of such arguments, he said that he would not let them anger him and that he did not feel threatened by unfounded charges. He preferred to state the facts.

20. The facts spoke for themselves. The Soviet Union and the West had made reciprocal concessions, thus proving the seriousness of the Sub-Committee's work and contradicting the severe judgement passed upon it by Mr. Gromyko. However, negotiating an agreement was like building a bridge: so long as the project was incomplete, what had been done was useless. The final spans had still to be built.

21. The main areas of disagreement related to the nuclear field, the field of conventional armaments, regional measures and the general idea of control.

22. The Soviet proposals on nuclear questions were: first, the total and unconditional prohibition of nuclear weapons and their elimination from the armaments of States, or, failing that, a solemn commitment not to use them, or if that was impossible too, a commitment of the same kind limited to a period of five years; secondly, the suspension of test explosions in isolation from the rest of the treaty and effective immediately for a period of "two or three years", accompanied by the acceptance in principle of a control the usefulness of which the Soviet Government had for a long time denied and for which it had not yet specified any practical means of application.

23. In other words, apart from the suspension of tests, the Soviet Government proposed only simple declarations of intention which could not be verified. Such declarations were valueless in the absence of confidence and they would be superfluous once confidence was established.

24. According to the Soviet Union's latest position, the Powers would undertake not to test their nuclear weapons for "two or three years" and not to use them for five years, but they would keep the weapons in their arsenals and remain free to manufacture them in unlimited quantities.

25. Was there a single representative who, distrusting a Power, would put faith in its statement that it would not use nuclear weapons and base the foreign and military policy of his country for five years on the unverifiable assertions of a neighbour it felt it could not trust? Was there a single Government producing nuclear weapons which would stop manufacturing them when its neighbour could go on producing them?

26. The Soviet Union's proposal would in fact trans-

form the world into a vast nuclear arsenal in which surplus nuclear devices would be put on the market for sale or given to allies, as was now the case for conventional weapons.

27. The USSR representative had characterized the Western Powers as mendacious and deceitful. If that was his opinion, how could he accept as valid any unverifiable commitment entered into by them?

28. The crux of the Soviet proposal was the isolated suspension of nuclear weapons tests. The Soviet delegation had chosen its ground carefully in making that issue the central one, for it was an issue on which those ruled by emotion clashed with the rational-minded. The first, gambling on the "great fear" they had helped to create, insisted, in its name, on immediate and isolated suspension. The Soviet representative had been supported on that point by the Indian representative, whose fervent speech deserved careful attention. Mr. Moch did not share all Mr. Krishna Menon's fears and, while agreeing on some points, did not draw the same conclusions.

29. There was no reason to give way to panic. Mr. Willard F. Libby, the American scientist, whom Mr. Krishna Menon had quoted (873rd meeting), had ended a lengthy study of strontium-90 by saying that the entire increase in the absorption of that element by man due to all the explosions already carried out was equal to the natural increase in radiation resulting from a mere elevation in altitude of a few hundred metres.

30. The Indian representative had expressed anxiety at the fact that by 1970 radio-active fall-out resulting from nuclear explosions would have raised the amount of radiation in human bones from 9 per cent to 45 per cent above the level produced by natural radiation. But it should be added that in the opinion of the experts, the amount of strontium present in the human bone structure was at present so far below the permissible maximum that even in 1970 it would still be forty times less than that limit.

31. Moreover, no Minister of Defence would equip his troops with the atomic machine guns and revolvers mentioned in the Committee because, taking into account the critical mass below which the chain reaction would not take place, each projectile for those devices would have to weigh about ten kilogrammes; ten tons of ammunition would be required for each minute of machine-gun fire and the revolver clip would weigh about one hundred kilogrammes.

32. It had been proved scientifically that chain reactions which would destroy the planet could not possibly be caused by tests made in peacetime. Moreover, the most powerful nuclear explosions released a thousand times less energy than the most severe earthquakes and barely as much as a tropical cyclone.

33. While he would not follow Mr. Krishna Menon in his incursions into the field of science, he did agree with him on one point: if there was any risk, no matter how slight, of increasing the mortality or morbidity rate of the species, the Powers had no right to expose mankind to that risk and should, without panicking, take the necessary measures to eliminate it.

34. Precisely because the Western Powers did not want mankind to run that risk, however slight, however disputed, they too wished to end nuclear tests though

Mr. Gromyko had covertly attributed the opposite intention to them. Moreover, they had, as a concession in which the French delegation had some part, agreed to the period of two years suggested by the Soviet Union. That convergence of views deserved to be emphasized as much as the remaining divergences.

35. The Soviet Union isolated suspension of tests from the rest of the agreement, in which it included only the temporary prohibition of use of nuclear weapons. Thus it followed that it would remain legal to manufacture bombs and to accumulate stocks of fissionable materials for military purposes not only during the two years of suspension of tests but during the five years' prohibition of use. There were two possible reasons for that attitude: the present inadequacy of Soviet stocks and the disinclination on the part of the Soviet Government to allow inspectors to enter the atomic plants and the uranium and plutonium factories of the USSR.

36. The position of the Western Powers was in clear contrast. Like the Soviet Union, the Western Powers wished to put an end to test explosions, but they considered that the danger resulting from the accumulation of nuclear weapons would be infinitely greater in war-time than that which certain authors held was created by peace-time tests. Whereas the Soviet Union accepted a continuation of the nuclear armaments race, the Western Powers wished to put an end to that race by combining the suspension of tests with two other steps: the suspension of production of fissionable materials for military purposes and a start in reconverting stockpiles to peaceful purposes. They insisted upon more for peace than the Soviet Union accepted.

37. The Western Powers had gone further in making concessions. They had, in substance, said that they would accept the suspension of tests from the entry into force of the treaty, even before the installation of the system of control over that suspension, on which the Soviet Union agreed only in principle. They had agreed not to delay the suspension of explosions until the signature of the technical, practical agreement that would make it possible to install that system of control. They were willing to discuss that agreement during the first twelve months of suspension. If the system of control was installed before the twelfth month, the agreement would be renewed for a second year. If not, each of the parties would regain all its freedom, except for the limitation and regulation of future explosions.

38. Moreover, the Western Powers had said that during the second year of suspension, agreement would be reached on the installation of controls for the cessation of production and on the date of that cessation. If the Soviet Union wished to delay the entrance of inspectors into its atomic plants, the Western Powers were prepared to set that date at the end of the two years' suspension of test explosions. It would have been difficult for the Western Powers to go any further in making concessions without allowing the nuclear arms race to go on. Thus their conscience was clear.

39. Turning to the Japanese draft resolution (A/C.1/L.174), he stressed that his delegation appreciated the feelings which had inspired it; nevertheless, it would vote against it because, except for a small difference in time periods, it adopted the Soviet

position. It proposed that the tests should be suspended from the date on which agreement in principle was reached regarding the control of that suspension until a report was made to the thirteenth session of the Assembly. During that interval the means of operation of the control system would be negotiated.

40. If that point of view were to prevail, tests would be suspended immediately, since the Soviet Union had accepted the principle of control. The suspension would therefore last for a period of twelve months, which would be used, according to the proposals of the Western Powers, to discuss the installation of control. But nothing would be decided, even in principle, regarding the nuclear arms race, which would continue freely. Nothing would guarantee that the USSR would accept the suspension of production and a beginning in the conversion of stocks.

41. His delegation therefore appealed to the Japanese delegation, in the light of the foregoing explanation and in full awareness of the intentions of the Western Powers to accept their wider conception of the struggle against nuclear weapons.

42. He had said that French policy was to bring about all the disarmament which could at present be controlled. That aim could be achieved in the nuclear field under the Western proposals, for the following reasons:

43. First, the suspension of test explosions could be verified if a control network was available which was sufficiently extensive to observe explosions difficult to detect, such as those in the stratosphere. The Western Powers proposed that suspension and that control.

44. Secondly, it was also possible to control the production of fissionable material after the installation of control of that production, and thus to prohibit its manufacture in a degree of purity—above 80 per cent in the case of uranium-235—which would make its use for military purposes possible. In that connexion, he recalled his statement of 5 July 1957 before the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission,^{1/} in which he had shown that such an inspection system would be relatively simple and inexpensive and would in no way infringe the political or economic sovereignty of States. The Western Powers proposed such prohibition and control.

45. Thirdly, it was possible to verify the conversion to peaceful uses of stocks accumulated before the installation of control and the Western Powers proposed such gradual conversion and control.

46. On the other hand, he said that it was not possible to detect stocks of fissionable material accumulated before the installation of control; the extent of the old stocks would never be known within a margin of error of less than about 30 per cent, which was far too large. He had pointed that out as early as 1952^{2/} and the Soviet delegation had admitted that fact in its proposals of 10 May 1955 (DC/71, annex 15). Today nothing could be done except to reduce, by verified conversion, stocks whose total was unknown; what would remain after those conversions would not be known. That was why the Western Powers had been unable to accept the Soviet idea of the "elimination of

stocks" which, since the elimination could not be verified, presupposed good faith and mutual confidence.

47. Nor was it possible to control prohibition of use, whether temporary or unlimited. That was why the Western Powers were not able to accept it unconditionally, but only with the exception of the cases of legitimate self-defence referred to in the Charter of the United Nations and on which the Charter placed no restrictions of any kind. To attempt, as did the Soviet Union, to subordinate the exercise of the right of self-defence to a decision of the Security Council, and therefore to a veto, was a covert attempt to amend the Charter. The Soviet delegation had also contended that, since the Charter had been drafted before the first atomic explosion, it could not provide for the use of atomic weapons for self-defence. That argument was invalid, first because nothing in the Charter limited the scope of the right of self-defence, and secondly, because the Charter had been ratified by the Soviet Union after the beginning of the atomic age and the Soviet Union had thus accepted the article concerning the right of self-defence in full knowledge of the facts.

48. With respect to conventional armaments, there was agreement on the three successive levels of the armed forces of the four Powers. The main point of disagreement was the manner of proceeding from one stage to the next. France had consistently held that the transition to the next stage could not be automatic; it could only be made after the control body had verified that the previous measures had been satisfactorily carried out. That condition had been implicitly accepted by the Soviet Union.

49. However, the Soviet Union had vigorously rejected a second condition, namely, that progress toward disarmament must in addition be subject to an improvement in the general international political situation. Peace remained unstable in Central Europe, in the Near and Far East and in subjugated and divided countries, and a settlement of the political issues in those areas must proceed concomitantly with disarmament. A beginning of disarmament would facilitate solutions of political problems; in turn, those solutions would make possible further military reductions. France could not agree on that point with the position taken by the Yugoslav representative (871st meeting).

50. Nevertheless, in order to break the vicious circle resulting from too close an interdependence between disarmament and the settlement of political issues, the Western Powers were prepared to give priority to disarmament, and to accept the risk involved. But that initial risk must be limited. Therefore, they considered it imperative to decide immediately on what steps toward disarmament could be undertaken in view of the present political situation. Once that first stage had been carried out, further steps could be decided upon in an atmosphere of reduced political tension.

51. As a first stage of disarmament, without any political precondition, the Western Powers were prepared to accept the following measures, whose importance should not be underestimated:

(a) A reduction of armed forces to 2.5 million men for the United States and the Soviet Union and to 750,000 men for the United Kingdom and France;

^{1/} See document DC/SC.1/PV.131.

^{2/} See Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Committee 1, 1st meeting, para. 26.

(b) The placing of a fixed number of the main types of conventional weapons in storage depots under international control;

(c) The prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons, except in cases of self-defence;

(d) The immediate suspension of nuclear test explosions;

(e) The cessation of production of fissionable material for military purposes as from a date to be determined;

(f) The conversion of stocks of fissionable material from military to peaceful purposes;

(g) The establishment of the necessary controls over those various operations as well as a system of control to safeguard against surprise attack;

(h) A study of control of outer-space missiles to ensure their use for peaceful purposes only;

(i) A study of the regulation of arms exports.

52. Considering the relief that would have been afforded to the General Assembly—and all mankind—he could only regret that the Soviet Government had rejected out of hand that whole coherent programme, for had it adopted a different attitude, immediate changes in the international atmosphere would have been effected.

53. There were differences of opinion with the Soviet Union regarding the regional measures of disarmament it had proposed. If the Western Powers were to accept the Soviet proposals to reduce armed forces in Germany, in the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and in the countries signatories of the Warsaw Treaty, and to liquidate a certain number of bases on foreign soil, and to withdraw nuclear weapons to their countries of origin, they would in effect be agreeing to a dismantling of the defences of the free world before global disarmament had been achieved and international confidence had been restored. The proposal was practically unacceptable, particularly so long as mistrust prevailed among the great Powers.

54. Moreover, the strategic position differed from one region to another. Obviously, the Soviet Union found it difficult to accept foreign bases scattered around its frontiers; but it was equally obvious that the Western Powers would prefer not to maintain those expensive bases thousands of miles from their territories. Yet, to reduce the number of those bases from the outset, before peace had been consolidated by disarmament, would be changing a consequence into a condition, that is to say putting the cart before the horse.

55. Similarly, reduction of the standing armies in Central Europe before peace had been consolidated, would also be strategically unreasonable. A reciprocal withdrawal by the Soviet Union and the Western Powers from the line which now divided Europe into two blocs to a distance no more than 500 kilometres to the west of that line would cut off the depth of manoeuvre of the Western forces by 50 per cent, while a shift of the same distance to the east of that line would cut off the depth of manoeuvre of the Soviet forces by no more than 5 per cent. In the same way, by withdrawing its forces to the country of origin, the Soviet Union would be moving them no more than a few hundred

kilometres, as far as the Russian-Polish border, whereas the United States would have to move its divisions some 6,000 kilometres, that is, to the other side of the Atlantic.

56. Therefore France considered that prudence required it to defer acceptance of any regional measures during the first stage of execution of a disarmament treaty and pending a restoration of mutual confidence.

57. The last of the main differences of view between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union concerned the principle of control. No system of inspection could be perfect; ways could always be found of concealing armaments, as proved by the feats of the resistance movements.

58. But there was no longer any question of unilateral control by the victor over the vanquished; the need was to build an international, reciprocal system to be operated by nations joined together under the banner of peace. Such a system was not expected to detect minor errors of subordinates, but proof of general goodwill on the part of the States associated in it, as an initial impetus to a restoration of international confidence, which was the permanent keystone of peace.

59. Instead, regardless of the system of inspection under consideration, the Soviet Union, while accepting certain controls—not always the same ones—refused to specify them, to define them clearly and unequivocally. But what was even more serious was that, in the view of Mr. Gromyko, control was conceivable only when mutual confidence prevailed, that is, when it became unnecessary. "No confidence, no control," seemed to be the Soviet slogan, to which the Western Powers retorted: "Towards confidence, through control".

60. That did not imply that the Western Powers did not share the desire of Mr. Gromyko for greater exchanges and the elimination of barriers between East and West. But those improvements did not contribute towards disarmament, the solution of political disputes or the restoration of confidence. Confidence could be created only by acceptance of effective international control, for such acceptance would constitute irrefutable proof of goodwill. Again, it was putting the cart before the horse to make control dependent on confidence.

61. Why was the USSR Government so clearly averse to considering the practical aspects of control? It was not surprising to Mr. Moch: how could international inspectors be given full freedom of action in a country where whole areas were still closed to accredited diplomats, and from which even residents were refused permission to leave? But the situation was extremely disturbing. Disarmament had to be achieved. It could only be achieved under effective control, but effective control was impossible so long as control officials did not enjoy the necessary freedom of movement. It was for the Soviet Union Government to demonstrate that its principles were compatible with the prerequisites of any system of effective control. Otherwise, there would be no disarmament and the anxiety of the world would continue to grow.

62. Turning to the conclusions of his statement, he said that, although the differences with the Soviet Union were serious, they were not insoluble. They could not, however, be profitably re-examined in the atmosphere of the deadlock in which the Sub-Committee's London negotiations had resulted. They would

have to be carefully studied by the Governments concerned, which would take the fullest account of the reactions of other States. It was in order to enable such a reconsideration in Moscow that he had analysed the Western views as precisely as possible. But he was not losing hope. He believed that the Soviet Government, which also wanted peace, would ultimately admit the need for effective control as a stimulus to mutual confidence, and, unwilling to allow the world's wounds to fester, would agree to negotiate, in ways acceptable to all, on outstanding disagreements.

63. For those reasons, and because it attached

importance to an international statement of policy, the French delegation urged the Assembly to express its feelings clearly by adopting the twenty-four-Power draft resolution by an overwhelming majority. Adoption of the draft resolution would not harden the French position, for that would be incompatible with its ardent desire for peace. After a necessary period of reflection, France was prepared to continue its conciliatory efforts, in the words of Aristide Briand, the pioneer of peace in the period between the two world wars, "once again to take up its pilgrim's staff".

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.