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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, A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.180) (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. BOLAND (Ireland) pointed out that, although the disarmament talks held by the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in London in 1957 had resulted in some narrowing of differences on isolated features of a disarmament programme, the Sub-Committee's reports (DC/112, DC/113) had not allayed anxiety concerning the armaments race and the disastrous consequences to which it might lead. The United Nations should endeavour to find some new approach to the problem which would break the deadlock between the principal Powers concerned. It could not expect to accomplish anything by adopting resolutions which merely restated the positions that the London negotiations had failed to reconcile, however reasonable the voting members might feel those proposals to

be. Agreement between the great Powers could not be expedited and might even be delayed by widening the area of commitment on points on which agreement had already proved impossible. Endorsement of any proposal by the Assembly would not pressure the great Powers into acceptance because the basic disagreement was on technical issues of disarmament vitally affecting the national security of those States. In the light of the Soviet reaction to United Nations resolutions on Hungary, it was unwise to expect the Soviet Union to accept the twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) even if it were adopted by an overwhelming majority.

2. On the other hand, it was natural and commendable that delegations should seek to introduce some new element which might lead to positive action. The Belgian delegation had made such an attempt in its draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1). Its draft stemmed from the idea that the peoples of the world must exercise all the pressure in their power to bring about international agreements on a question vital to their survival. An alert and well-informed public opinion was usually the best safeguard of the public good, and the public should have a fuller understanding of the risks involved in a continued arms race. It should understand for example the so-called "fourth country" danger, namely that, unless nuclear weapons were brought under control, more and more countries would come to possess them and the prospects of global nuclear war would be greater. It should also understand that the vast resources diverted to armaments production meant that people in the under-developed countries would remain under-privileged and would gradually lose faith in the free and democratic institutions they had managed to establish. However, those were matters relating to the general background of disarmament rather than to the technical and practical issues impeding progress. The role which the public could usefully play with respect to those practical obstacles was more open to question.

3. Negotiations between Governments on so vital an issue were adversely affected by too much publicity. Firm positions taken publicly and in advance made agreement more difficult. The Assembly's suggestion, when it had established the Sub-Committee by its resolution 715 (VIII), that it should work in private, had not been sufficiently heeded. Its deliberations had seemed less like diplomatic negotiations aimed at agreement than like a court hearing before a world jury. Yet, only agreement between the Powers directly concerned offered a way out of the crisis. Moreover, the danger of a public or propagandist approach was that it assumed that all peoples were equally free to know, criticize and oppose the policies of their Governments and that Governments were equally sensitive and responsive to their people's demands. That assumption was no more true in 1957 than on the eve of the Second World War, when Hitler was proceeding

with the military build-up of Nazi Germany and public opinion in other countries, under the influence of peace propaganda, was forcing Governments to vote cuts in military expenditure and reductions in national armaments.

4. In the view of the Irish delegation, disarmament could not be dealt with separately from the political issues which were causing mounting tension throughout the world. The arms race was a reflection of the tense political situation resulting from the clash of vital interests and the presence of opposing military forces in various areas of the world. For the world was divided not only ideologically, but by two immense concentrations of military power constantly manoeuvring for advantage. The situation in the Middle East was a case in point: behind the smaller countries of the area stood the two chief Powers of the world, each committed by its public declarations and the logic of its policy to counter any threat of a breach of the peace as though mutual nuclear deterrents did not exist. So long as there was the slightest challenge to peace anywhere, no State would lay down its arms.

5. The international political situation had worsened to the point where all mutual confidence had been destroyed. Ireland agreed with the statement of the representative of Peru (868th meeting) that the cause of the arms race lay in that lack of mutual confidence, and it was with that critical problem that the Assembly should grapple. It was not enough merely to adopt draft resolutions urging continued negotiations; a more radical approach was required. There was little point in increasing the membership of the Disarmament Commission or its Sub-Committee because those bodies were not competent to deal with the causes of political tension. Nor could any real progress result from attempting to deal separately with certain aspects of disarmament: the effect would be to reopen the discussions deadlocked in London and to disregard the major factor of distrust which had pervaded those talks.

6. A further effort had to be made to resolve the political issues which divided the great Powers and, as a first step, there must be a relaxation of tension in the most sensitive areas: in Central Europe, the Middle East and the Far East, especially Korea. That could be achieved only by discussions between the Powers, but especially between the United States and the Soviet Union. Those discussions should be on the highest possible level, with the broadest possible terms of reference, and should be held in private. As the representative of France, Mr. Moch, had indicated (877th meeting), discussions on disarmament and on reducing political tension could proceed concurrently; no progress could be made on the former without substantial agreements on the latter. There should be a reciprocal withdrawal of foreign forces inside Europe and a reciprocal diplomatic withdrawal in the Middle East. While that step would not solve all the problems of those areas, it would reduce the risk of explosion at the points of greatest tension. But what was more essential, it would enable disarmament talks to proceed in a new and more favourable atmosphere.

7. Mr. KISELEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that world public opinion was demanding that the United Nations, and especially the great Powers, should take constructive steps towards disarmament.

8. Many speakers had called for the speedy conclusion of an international disarmament agreement, which constant technological progress in the thermo-nuclear field had rendered even more necessary.

9. He agreed with the representative of India (873rd meeting) and other representatives who maintained that the smaller and medium-sized countries could play their part in bringing about the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction and the reduction of armaments and armed forces.

10. Some representatives had contended that the lack of progress in the disarmament field was due to the negative attitude of the Soviet Union. Such statements seemed primarily designed to deflect the Committee from its work. The representative of the United States, in his speech of 10 October (866th meeting), had made so many conditions and reservations that it would be practically impossible to achieve disarmament. He had, for understandable reasons, suggested that the first step should be the establishment of control over intercontinental ballistic missiles and artificial earth satellites. Those devices, however, were not dangerous in themselves. They were only important as potential carriers of nuclear explosives, and consequently the problem of control over ballistic missiles must be solved in close connexion with the problem of the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

11. After deploring the fact that the present differences of opinion appeared almost as great as ever before, the United States representative had dwelt at length on the Western proposals of 29 August 1957 (DC/113, annex 5). Those proposals, however, contained nothing very new. The Western Powers now suggested a twelve months' initial period for the suspension of tests, instead of the ten months previously proposed, but they still adhered to their old reservations. They insisted that agreement on the suspension of tests should be made conditional on the solution of outstanding political problems and on consent to mutual aerial inspection, neither of which was an essential prerequisite of disarmament. Furthermore, they demanded the discontinuance of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes without themselves accepting the prohibition and elimination of existing nuclear weapons. It was thus apparent that the alleged "new" proposals were designed solely to delude world public opinion.

12. The United States still adhered to the strange belief that peace could be ensured through a balance of power, with all the great Powers fully geared for war, although it was obvious that such a situation could never foster international co-operation. Furthermore, the United States was actively pursuing a policy of provocation, one result of which was the present state of affairs in the Middle East. It was clear, therefore, that the lack of progress on the disarmament question was attributable solely to the United States and the other Western Powers. Ample additional evidence of that fact could be found in the huge increase in their military expenditure and in the menacing growth of their armed forces.

13. He quoted figures from official United States sources to show that, in the past few years, there had been marked increases in military expenditure and in armaments and armed forces in the United States, which, together with its allies, had been actively preparing for a new world war. For the sake of monetary

gain, the ruling circles of those countries were prepared to sacrifice the lives of hundreds of millions of human beings. Certain private publications in the United States had indeed openly admitted that military production was the mainspring of that country's economy. The United States representative's assertions that the ruling circles of his country were interested in peace were thus sheer hypocrisy; he had tried to hide the reluctance of the United States to put an end to the testing of nuclear weapons by boldly suggesting that the Soviet Union represented a threat to the so-called "free world". After listening to those statements, and after careful study of the proceedings of the Subcommittee of the Disarmament Commission and the documents presented by both sides, the Byelorussian delegation was now convinced that the Western Powers, especially the United States, had no intention of reaching an agreement. The same conclusion had in fact been reached by certain sections of the press both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. He gave as instances an article by Mr. R.H.S. Crossman in the London Daily Mirror of 28 May 1957 and another article in the New York Herald Tribune of 9 June 1957.

14. The Soviet Government had put forward a constructive proposal for the cessation of tests of nuclear weapons for a period of two to three years and for the establishment of an effective international system of supervision (A/3674/Rev.1). The Western Powers had not formally rejected that proposal, but had made agreement virtually impossible by insisting that the question of the cessation of tests should be conditional on simultaneous agreement on other questions. Such refusal to give prior consideration to the truly crucial issue constituted an open defiance of the will of all peace-loving peoples.

15. Recent developments in the field of military technology had made every point of the globe vulnerable. Any future war would thus have particularly serious consequences for highly populated countries with concentrated industrial installations. With that fact in mind, the Soviet Union had presented a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1) appealing to the States which possessed nuclear weapons to assume a temporary obligation not to use them. That draft offered a way out of the present impasse and the Committee was in duty bound to support it. Responsible organizations and individuals in many countries had already acclaimed that proposal, and its acceptance by the States concerned would avert the ever-growing danger to the very existence of mankind. The question of the discontinuance of the armaments race and of all tests involving nuclear weapons had become the most urgent problem of international life.

16. With reference to the draft resolution submitted by Japan (A/C.1/L.174), the Byelorussian delegation felt that the question of the cessation of tests should not be made contingent on simultaneous agreement on other aspects of the disarmament problem. Furthermore, the text would be more satisfactory if the period of suspension of tests was lengthened and if the effective date of the suspension was specified.

17. In his statement (869th meeting) the United Kingdom representative had echoed the United States arguments regarding the importance of the cessation of military production out of newly produced fissionable materials. He had tried to show that such a step would constitute the most decisive contribution to the

elimination of the danger of atomic warfare. The purpose of that proposal, however, was only to mislead world public opinion. Such a step would not eliminate the danger of a nuclear war, because countries would still be free to utilize stockpiles of fissionable materials that they had accumulated in the past.

18. As to the doubts expressed by the Western Powers regarding the effectiveness of any undertaking not to use nuclear weapons, it was significant that the agreement prohibiting the use of bacterial and chemical weapons had never been violated by a single State, not even by Hitler's Germany. The influence of public opinion would similarly guarantee respect for an agreement condemning the use of nuclear weapons.

19. Lastly, the Byelorussian delegation could not accept the twenty-four-Power draft resolution. A satisfactory solution of the problem of control over intercontinental missiles and artificial earth satellites could be found only after agreement had been reached on the essential problem, namely, the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. The only truly constructive approach to the solution of all urgent problems in the field of disarmament could be found in the proposals submitted by the Soviet Union. The adoption of those proposals would not only put an end to the armaments race and reduce international tension but would also guarantee the peaceful use of atomic energy for the greater benefit of mankind.

20. Mr. SASTROAMIDJOJO (Indonesia) said that the time had come to heed the expectations of the peoples of the world by carrying out concrete measures of disarmament. A new climate of confidence in a world in the process of disarming could thus be created. However, disarmament negotiations could hardly be expected to produce fruitful results when the Powers conducting the negotiations were simultaneously pursuing policies of competition in armaments and in the establishment of military bases and agreements. In order to fulfil their primary responsibility to achieve agreement on disarmament, the great Powers must first cease or refrain from actions inimical to such an agreement.

21. The armaments race vitally affected all countries; moreover, it threatened the endeavours of the underdeveloped countries to raise their standard of living and diverted the great Powers from their true mission, which was to help in the development of those countries. The small nations therefore had the right and duty to state their positions on the problem and to contribute towards its solution.

22. A country like Indonesia, situated in a region where atomic tests were being carried out, could not be indifferent to such tests. There was general agreement that increases in radiation jeopardized the health of mankind; the only question that remained in dispute was whether mankind had already reached, or was fast approaching, the point at which the effects of increased radiation endangered its very survival. But the doubt itself was a compelling reason to end nuclear test explosions. No man of conscience could subscribe to the thesis of the United States Atomic Energy Commission that tests of nuclear weapons were justified because the genetic damage resulting from fall-out was "tolerable". Moreover, even that conclusion had been based on the assumption that the rate of testing would remain the same, whereas it would, in fact, probably

increase as more and more countries embarked on testing programmes. To avoid the catastrophic situation which would thus be created, the Government and people of Indonesia appealed to the Powers to end nuclear test explosions immediately.

23. The argument that a suspension of tests would not halt the nuclear arms race was irrelevant for the point of such an agreement would be to ensure the survival of mankind. Moreover, the continuation of such tests would not increase the security of the great Powers since they already possessed the capacity to deter any potential aggressor from making a nuclear attack. On the other hand, an agreement to suspend the tests under an adequate system of control would have a beneficial effect on the disarmament negotiations, particularly with regard to problems on which the parties concerned had already drawn closer to each other.

24. A reversal of the present nuclear arms race was a matter of vital concern and urgency, and further efforts should therefore be made towards reaching agreement on a first-phase disarmament programme which would include: first, the total prohibition of the use and manufacture of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction; secondly, the conversion of existing stocks of nuclear weapons to peaceful uses; thirdly, the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only; and fourthly, the establishment of effective international control to guarantee the observance of those agreements as well as of the agreement on conventional armaments.

25. In that connexion, his delegation was deeply concerned over the change in the position of some of the great Powers, which now contended that the use of nuclear weapons should be permitted in the cases of self-defence provided for in the United Nations Charter. Such a conditional prohibition would not only be contrary to the General Assembly's resolutions calling for total prohibition, but would also destroy the

principle that atomic energy should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Worse still, the idea of a limited prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons could be interpreted only as meaning that those weapons would be used in local conflicts resulting from the power struggle between the two great blocs. Those conflicts would inevitably take place on the territory of small or weak nations, which would consequently be the first victims of a nuclear war in which both sides would undoubtedly describe their actions as an exercise of the right of self-defence.

26. It should also be emphasized that a limited prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons would allow the nuclear arms race to continue unchecked, for it would be left to the great Powers to determine the size of the stockpiles needed for self-defence, and they would obviously do so in terms of the existing tension and mistrust. National security must no longer be equated with military strength alone, and the achievements of science must be regarded as a means of improving living conditions, not of gaining military advantages.

27. The Indonesian delegation considered that the small nations could help in restoring morality in science and therefore favoured the principle of enlarging the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission. The French representative had argued that the participation of other countries in the Sub-Committee would be of no value because progress in disarmament depended upon agreement between the great Powers, which were already represented there. But Canada's participation in the work of the Sub-Committee had been valuable and the inclusion of representatives of other States would also contribute to the possibility of progress. Their task would be but to suggest a line of conduct more responsive to world public opinion and the needs of all humanity, and to seek unanimity through conciliation and mutual compromise.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.