

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Chairman: Mr. Djatal ABDQH (Iran).**

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. de Barros (Brazil), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

## 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. AHMED (Pakistan) said that, having listened with close attention to the statements of the representatives of the five Powers which were members of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission and the other delegations which had taken part in the debate so far, he had realized that the one note common to all the speeches was the desperate urgency of halting the armaments race. His delegation shared the universal feeling on that matter. It hoped that the nuclear Powers now standing face to face in a posture of conflict, would yield their ground and make a move towards putting into effect at least such measures of

disarmament as were, on their own admission, immediately feasible, without waiting for a complete agreement on all aspects of disarmament.

2. The Western Powers as well as the Soviet Union felt that total disarmament must await the establishment of full mutual confidence among the major Powers in particular, and generally among all the nations of the world. Both sides considered that wholesale disarmament was not practicable at the present stage, since it was scientifically impossible to institute an effective control system to detect the carrying out of tests of nuclear weapons or the existence of stocks of such weapons. That being so, any disarmament negotiations, if they were to be fruitful, should concentrate on a plan of partial disarmament. There was general agreement on that point.

3. There had been a narrowing of the gap on some of the specific measures enumerated by the representative of the United States (866th meeting). Unfortunately, disagreement on other highly important issues remained as wide as before. That was particularly so in regard to nuclear disarmament, as the question of the suspension of tests was linked to the issue of the use of fissionable materials for military purposes.

4. His delegation approved unreservedly the idea of discontinuing nuclear tests, and thought that the use of nuclear weapons should be banned, but it wondered why the production of fissionable material for war purposes should continue or why an effective control system could not be devised to ensure enforcement of those measures. There should be no objection to the acceptance of conditions which were equally applicable to all, particularly when they were designed to ensure the attainment of a common objective.

5. In the matter of reduction of levels of armed forces and conventional armaments, his delegation thought that if certain rigid positions were relaxed progress should be possible. It would urge the immediate conclusion of an agreement to reduce armed forces substantially below existing levels, to exchange lists of weapons to be set aside under international control and to set up depots under international supervision for the storage of designated types of armaments to be mutually agreed upon. It urged the Soviet Union to accept the Western proposal for storage depots of that type and appealed to the Western Powers to agree to proceed to the second stage of their proposal, namely to reduce armed forces to 2.1 million men and 750,000, without attaching conditions to the acceptance of those lower figures.

6. His delegation was convinced that if an agreement was reached and implemented without waiting for a reconciliation of opposing viewpoints on the other measures of partial disarmament set forth in the twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1), the disarmament negotiations would

emerge from the existing deadlock and the way would be opened to further agreement.

7. His delegation had already made a suggestion to that effect at the tenth session of the General Assembly, and in resolution 914 (X) of 16 December 1955, the General Assembly had urged the members of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission to give priority to early agreement on and implementation of all such measures of adequately safeguarded disarmament as were then feasible. His delegation understood that to mean the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments; it was accordingly disappointed to note that the Sub-Committee had not given that matter the attention called for by the Assembly's resolution. On the contrary, in the Western proposals of 29 August 1957 (DC/113, annex 5), the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments had been linked with other measures which represented a partial disarmament plan on which agreement had so far proved impossible. None of the statements made in the debate had convinced his delegation that a separate agreement on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments under international control should not be concluded and implemented.

8. His delegation had no doubt that aerial inspection would go a long way towards preventing the possibility of surprise attack, and it hoped that agreement might be reached on the progressive implementation of aerial and ground inspection over a limited zone in Europe. That would be an important confidence-building measure. But there again, the linking of proposals to guard against surprise attack with the other components of the first-stage disarmament plan would be a reversal of resolution 914 (X) and would prejudice the successful outcome of negotiations in the Sub-Committee on even those measures of disarmament which lay within the realm of immediate possibility.

9. With regard to the question of aerial inspection, he recalled the public refutation issued by his Government on the occasion of the statement made by the representative of the Soviet Union before the Sub-Committee on 5 September 1957. The USSR had objected to the exclusion from aerial inspection of bases of the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Baghdad Pact, and the South-East Asia Treaty Organization in, among other countries, Pakistan. He repeated that there were no foreign military bases in Pakistan.

10. With regard to the membership of the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee, he said that the divergences separating the nuclear Powers on the Sub-Committee were a manifestation of differences too fundamental to be resolved by procedural devices. Agreement on disarmament measures must in the final analysis depend primarily on the great Powers; as for the Disarmament Commission, his delegation considered that it was adequately representative of the principal geographical areas. Moreover, the General Assembly provided a world forum for the eighty-two Members of the United Nations to express themselves on all issues and on the stand taken by the great Powers in disarmament negotiations.

11. While it considered that there was no need for any change in the membership of the existing organs, his delegation was not entirely satisfied with the use that had been made of them. The Disarmament Commission had reduced itself to a mere agency for transmitting

the records of the Sub-Committee to the General Assembly. He hoped that in future it would actively assist the Sub-Committee by providing it with a greater measure of guidance.

12. With regard to the effects of nuclear test explosions on human health, his delegation noted that the experts differed considerably in their conclusions and that no decisive opinion had been reached. It was not convinced that damage to human health as a result of past and future test explosions was unlikely; and it appreciated the reasons which had prompted the Japanese delegation to put forward its special proposal (A/C.1/L.174) for the suspension of tests. It hoped that the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation would throw further light on the subject.

13. Penetration of outer space by the intercontinental ballistic missile and the artificial earth satellite added a new dimension to the problem of disarmament. The Western proposal for a joint study with the Soviet Union of means to ensure that the sending of objectives through outer space would be exclusively for peaceful and scientific purposes had not come a moment too soon. His delegation welcomed the undertaking given by the United States representative (866th meeting) that the Western Powers were prepared to consider that study separately from the other proposals in order that a control system might be adopted and applied while it was not yet too late.

14. Mr. NUÑEZ PORTUONDO (Cuba) said that the disarmament question should be examined practically and in all honesty in view of its importance to the independence and security of States. It was not right to pretend to represent a neutral State and then to side constantly with one group against another when international problems were discussed.

15. Cuba wished to state clearly that it was not neutral. For many years it had had mutual and collective treaties with other countries on the American continent, including the United States. It had taken an active part in two world wars and would participate again in any war in which a nation in America was attacked by a State from another continent. The security of the United States of America was its own security.

16. Cuba was unimpressed by the mighty propaganda campaign which the Soviet Union and its followers were waging over the disarmament question; that was a well-known procedure designed to force the West to disarm so as to conquer it, as the Soviet Union had done with weak and unarmed countries which had been naive enough to believe Soviet promises of friendship.

17. The Soviet Union proved its lack of sincerity by conducting atomic experiments despite the constant Soviet emphasis on the irreparable damage which atomic tests represented to health. After the announcement from Washington that the United States was prepared to produce "clean" bombs with markedly reduced radio-active fall-out, the Soviet Union immediately changed its tune. It no longer spoke of the health of peoples, but said that any bomb, whether "clean" or not, would cause tremendous material damage if used in war.

18. The Cuban delegation considered that, since confidence did not and could not exist, disarmament was fundamentally a problem of mutual guarantees. Nothing practical could be achieved even if a great majority of the General Assembly reached agreement on how to

effect disarmament, if the Soviet Union and a minority of countries were unwilling to accept the recommendation of the most important organ of the United Nations.

19. That surely did not mean that the majority of the General Assembly had to give in and accept the proposals of the Soviet Union, a country which inspired no confidence in the face of the imposing list of international treaties it had violated in its forty years of existence. The recent tragic case of Hungary was proof enough of the way in which Moscow accepted and carried out the General Assembly's resolutions.

20. It was said that the Soviet Union had only peaceful aims and was not intent upon conquest. Nevertheless, in forty years it had conquered large areas and enslaved millions of people. Was it likely that the Western Powers would still be free and independent if the United States had not possessed atomic weapons? Renunciation of atomic weapons without absolute and complete guarantees would be extremely foolhardy.

21. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution, of which Cuba was a co-sponsor, offered the Soviet Union all reasonable guarantees. The draft contained no provision in any way prejudicial to the Soviet Union's legitimate interests. It appeared to furnish suitable groundwork for agreement. The Soviet Union's opposition to the draft, therefore, could only increase the mistrust felt by the Cuban delegation.

22. If a tragic error were committed, the free States would be the victims and would lose their independence and sovereignty.

23. Mr. SHAHA (Nepal) said that, although his country did not possess any military force with which to threaten the peace of its neighbours or of the world, it realized from the experience of the last two wars that despite its isolation, in the event of another global war its destiny would be closely bound up with that of the rest of mankind.

24. Small countries like Nepal had joined the United Nations in the hope that it might be able to free the world from the scourge of war and help them to develop through international co-operation. But expenditure on projects for the development of under-developed countries was negligible compared with the amount spent on the production of armaments in the world.

25. During the long series of meetings of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in 1957 fresh hopes had been aroused in the minds of people all over the world, but had vanished when the great Powers decided to refer the matter to the General Assembly. It was disappointing and discouraging to read the Sub-Committee's reports (DC/112, DC/113), which showed that the atmosphere of apparent mutual understanding and trust among the great Powers in the initial stages of the London discussions had not borne fruit. Nevertheless there had been a narrowing of differences on some basic issues. The Soviet Union had approved President Eisenhower's "open skies" plan (DC/71, annex 17), and the Western Powers had agreed to Prime Minister Bulganin's scheme for ground inspection posts (DC/71, annex 15) for the prevention of surprise attacks. The Soviet Union had thus agreed to the principle of international inspection. There had been agreement on an initial reduction of armed forces to 2.5 million for the United States, the USSR and the People's Republic of China and to

750,000 for France and the United Kingdom. There had also been a kind of agreement on partial disarmament as a first step, on the nature of a possible reduction in manpower and conventional armaments, on the possibility of suspension of nuclear tests under international control, and on the principle of aerial and ground inspection posts against surprise attacks.

26. Despite that narrowing of differences, there had been no agreement between the Powers principally involved on the problem of disarmament as a whole.

27. The delegation of Nepal regarded international inspection as a concomitant of disarmament. Unilateral promises of good behaviour could inspire little confidence in matters as vital as national security, especially in view of the existing dissensions and distrust created by the "cold war". On the other hand, the system of inspection and control would create confidence.

28. Doubts had been expressed about the omission from the twenty-four-Power draft resolution of the express prohibition of atomic weapons. It had been asked whether the omission meant that the Western Powers had abandoned their ultimate objective of complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. In his delegation's opinion, it did not indicate anything of the sort. The draft resolution merely suggested in a realistic manner the lines along which the negotiations should be conducted with a view to achieving what was immediately feasible in the field of disarmament.

29. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution could provide a working basis for disarmament talks. His delegation was happy to hear the assurance given by the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada (878th meeting) that the attitude of the Powers sponsoring the draft resolution would not be inflexible and rigid, and that the present draft would not be the final word on the subject.

30. Although scientists disagreed on the extent of the harm caused by radio-active fall-out, they agreed that harm was done. There was no sense in waiting for the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation on the subject to be published, if something could be done in the meantime to mitigate the harmful effects of atomic radiation.

31. The suggestions for the suspension of tests of nuclear weapons were of course ultimately related to the control of the production of fissionable materials. Nevertheless, the temporary suspension of tests on a trial basis might facilitate agreement on other aspects of disarmament, including control of the production of fissionable materials for war purposes. The Committee should examine proposals for the suspension of tests with that in mind.

32. His delegation had listened attentively to the arguments of those who opposed enlarging the membership of the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee. It nevertheless felt sure that the increase would facilitate an understanding between the two parties which were stubbornly at odds in the Commission and its Sub-Committee.

33. Mr. GARIN (Portugal) said that the world was greatly disturbed by the magnitude and complexity of the problem of disarmament; the survival of the entire human species was now dependent on the solution of that problem. Mankind was perhaps faced with its

last chance to escape annihilation. The problem of disarmament must therefore be approached with courage and faith, for its solution would decide the fate of the present generation as well as that of generations to come. There could be no agreement on disarmament unless realities and the limitations imposed by those realities in actual practice were kept constantly in mind.

34. Turning to the work of the Sub-Committee, he noted that although hopes had frequently been disappointed during the past few years, some progress had undoubtedly been made. Some of the most fruitful negotiations had often only succeeded after patient and persevering efforts, and the reason why the positive results of the disarmament talks went unnoticed was that the absence of any agreement between the great Powers inspired all peoples with justifiable anxiety. In actual fact, the Western Powers and the Soviet Union had found some common ground for agreement. That fact should arouse hopes which might help to create a more favourable climate for the Sub-Committee's future discussions, and the world would be better served by a cautious optimism than by a description of the apocalyptic dangers with which it was threatened. Questions of national prestige and propaganda ought not to figure among the momentous disarmament negotiations, whose sole purpose was to guarantee world security. In view of the present tension, it was imperative that the United Nations should recognize the necessity of a first-stage agreement which would pave the way for the settlement of certain political problems of paramount importance.

35. The Portuguese delegation thought that in the atmosphere of distrust which was poisoning international relations, it would be impossible to bring about any disarmament, even limited disarmament, by means of promises, declarations or agreements which were not covered by guarantees. It was necessary, therefore, to establish a system of control and inspection. That was a *sine qua non* of disarmament. As was well known, the Soviet Union had unfortunately not shown any desire to come to grips with the question of control and inspection, which continued to be the chief obstacle to any disarmament, whether total or partial. At a certain stage in the Sub-Committee's negotiations, it almost seemed that the Soviet Union had changed its attitude toward control, but those hopes had been dashed. The Soviet Union, in fact, had refused to agree to what all the other countries represented on the Sub-Committee regarded as a necessary precondition for disarmament. The basic problem remained the same: how could the Soviet Union be induced to change its attitude? No question of principle should be involved, since the USSR, as well as the other countries in the Soviet bloc, had unreservedly signed and ratified the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which provided for a system of control and inspection. It would seem—and certain remarks by the Soviet representative seemed to confirm it—that for the USSR control and inspection necessarily implied some form of espionage. Obviously the aerial photography flights of which Mr. Gromyko had spoken (867th meeting) would be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, as part of an international control system. Far from arousing distrust, such flights would, on the contrary, give the people in the territories concerned a feeling of confidence and security.

36. The Portuguese delegation thought that the twenty-four-Power draft resolution was a well-balanced proposal which would be helpful in negotiating a first-stage disarmament agreement. The preparation of such an agreement would not present any insurmountable difficulties, and, judging by experience, it would be easier than might be expected to work out a control system. The advantages of such an agreement would be tremendous. The suspension of nuclear tests would allay the fears of the countries where they were being held. The production of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, in which Portugal was greatly interested, would make rapid progress, and outer space missiles would no longer pose a threat to humanity. Moreover, such an agreement would provide a way out of the present deadlock.

37. He supported the Belgian draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1). Finally, he expressed the hope that the first, positive steps towards disarmament would be taken soon.

38. Mr. DE FREITAS VALLE (Brazil) pointed out the contrast between the growing quantities of more and more highly perfected weapons which States were accumulating and the futility of all efforts toward bringing about a genuine disarmament. Public opinion was viewing that contrast with increasing anxiety, since it was of the highest importance for everyone, even though the solution of the problem depended on only a few.

39. Confidence was a prerequisite of any practical measure of disarmament. Unfortunately, that prior condition did not seem to be fulfilled. The human race was following a course suggestive of suicide.

40. It could not be seriously contended that certain countries had been led to devote enormous sums to armaments solely by a desire to make a display of their might or to impose their will on others. The Powers which were acting in that way were as afraid as the rest of the world they were helping to shape; but they did not want to run the risk of being left defenceless. After a brief period of mutual confidence, the world had been forced into that course by a threat from the East. Because of that threat, the American Republics, for example, had had to unite for the sake of self-defence rather than for the sake of improving the living conditions of their peoples.

41. Disarmament was highly desirable, but it would be dangerous to disarm at the expense of security. Disarmament should be genuine and it should be carefully balanced, in order not to give an advantage to a potential aggressor. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution fulfilled those conditions. The stumbling-block was the Soviet Union's opposition to any clause providing for effective control, however minimal.

42. The Brazilian delegation was convinced that the text proposed by the twenty-four Powers offered the General Assembly the most suitable formula in the present circumstances. The reason why it did not mention the prohibition of nuclear weapons was simply that it was aimed at achieving immediately practicable measures. For all that, the prohibition of nuclear weapons was still the final objective.

43. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution did not include all the proposals which the Western Powers had made in London. It gave due consideration to the

ideas which had been expressed in the Sub-Committee by the Soviet Union.

44. Brazil was not neutral in the ideological and political struggle which was taking place throughout the world. It sincerely hoped that peace would prevail without the necessity for retaining the present level of armaments; and it did not doubt that the Western Powers cherished the same desire. It was for the Soviet Union to demonstrate by its actions that it was ready to abide by the rules of peaceful coexistence with the other nations of the globe. That was the only way to re-establish the necessary confidence.

Mr. Abdoh (Iran) took the Chair.

45. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) stressed the importance and the urgency of the problem of disarmament. Like other peoples throughout the world, the Bulgarian people ardently desired that concrete measures should be taken to put a stop to the armaments race. It was therefore necessary that the General Assembly, at its present session, should take decisions which would free the negotiations from the impasse in which they still stood after seventy-one meetings of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission.

46. An attempt had been made to reassure public opinion by claiming that some progress had been made at London. The fact had to be faced; however, that no real steps had been taken, except for the reductions in armaments and armed forces carried out by the Soviet Union and the people's democracies in an effort to set an example for the NATO States.

47. All the Western delegations participating in the debate were asking for further concessions by the Soviet Union, but there was little likelihood of the members of NATO themselves making genuine concessions. The NATO countries had in fact announced that, if the Soviet Union did not accept their proposals, they would continue the armaments race and extend their network of military alliances. Moreover, every time the Soviet Union had accepted their point of view, the Western countries abandoned their own proposals. Obviously if such policies were continued, no positive results would ever be achieved.

48. The ultimate goal of the United Nations should be a general agreement on disarmament. In the present circumstances, however, a start had to be made with an agreement on some of the more urgent problems, in order to put a stop to the armaments race and to remove the mistrust pervading international relations.

49. From the very start of the negotiations on disarmament, the opposing parties had based their attitude on two conflicting concepts. The attitude of the Western Powers was essentially that, if peace was to be firmly established, the Western Powers must have military supremacy which would in no way be jeopardized by disarmament measures. For that reason those Powers attached outstanding importance to atomic weapons.

50. The Soviet Union looked at the matter in quite a different way. It continued to propose a prohibition of nuclear weapons even at a time when the Western Powers feared that they had been overtaken and passed in certain scientific fields which might be connected with the production of modern armaments. When the Western Powers had proposed numerical ceilings on

the armed forces of the great Powers, the Soviet Union had expressed its agreement, thus proving that it was not at all bent on military supremacy. Thereupon, the Western Powers saw fit to abandon their own proposals.

51. The entire policy of the socialist countries was based on the principle of peaceful coexistence. It was the Soviet Union that had taken the initiative in bringing the problem of disarmament before the United Nations by submitting a number of concrete proposals. When the pressure of public opinion had compelled the Western Powers to change their attitude, they had presented plans which included certain provisions unacceptable to the other side. They had, for instance, proposed regulation of the production of atomic weapons but had refused to prohibit such weapons; similarly, they had made a reduction in armaments and armed forces contingent upon the solution of political problems, in contradiction to the United Nations Charter, which required that States should solve their differences by peaceful means.

52. International disputes could be settled much more easily if armaments programmes and military bases in foreign territories were abandoned. A decision along such lines could not help but create an atmosphere of security and confidence in the world.

53. All the arguments of the Western Powers were designed to cast doubt on the very idea of disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons, and to convince public opinion that an atomic war was inevitable.

54. The resolutions which the General Assembly had thus far adopted on the subject of disarmament attached particular importance to the prohibition of nuclear weapons and to the elimination of such weapons from the armaments used by States. The Bulgarian delegation believed that it would be possible at the present session to take a concrete decision, capable of immediate application. The Soviet Union had proposed (A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1) that the great Powers should categorically undertake to renounce the use of nuclear weapons for a period of at least five years. Such a step would greatly facilitate future negotiations concerning a complete prohibition of atomic weapons production and the control measures which would be necessary to that end.

55. The counter-proposals submitted by the Western Powers in response to the Soviet proposals showed that those Powers practically admitted the prospect of an atomic war and that they sought to give legal sanction to the shipment of nuclear weapons to other States. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution did not even mention the prohibition or elimination of nuclear weapons. The draft therefore represented a step backwards from the decision taken by the General Assembly in 1954.

56. In the matter of atomic weapons tests, the Western Powers had been unable to resort to the argument of control, since controls were readily feasible in that field. Instead, they had arbitrarily linked that problem with the problem of the production of fissionable materials. However, there was unanimous agreement among scientists that such tests represented a very serious danger. The General Assembly could and must take a firm decision in that matter: in so doing,

it would take an important step towards a partial solution of the disarmament problem.

57. The Western Powers felt that they must continue tests of nuclear weapons in order to ensure their military supremacy. But it was possible that their calculations were ill-founded. By compelling the Soviet Union to compete in the armaments race, they ran the risk of being outstripped by their competitors. The great victory represented by the launching of the famous sputnik might give them pause in that connexion. There could, of course, be no doubt as to the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union, but in a period characterized by an armaments race and by the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, one false move in the application of the "brink-of-war" policy, such as mass concentrations of troops along certain frontiers, world.

58. Unfortunately, the risks involved did not prevent

certain monopolies from encouraging the armaments race, since it was a source of immense profit to them. It was an outrageous state of affairs that the fate of millions of human beings should depend on a handful of people motivated by a desire for profits. The Bulgarian delegation understood the difficulties confronting certain Governments and statesmen in the face of demands from those powerful groups. Nevertheless, they would show far greater statesmanship by advancing the interests of peoples throughout the world and breaking the resistance of the armament monopolies.

59. If the General Assembly were to take decisions calculated to contribute to the adoption of partial and concrete measures, it would be paving the way to disarmament and, consequently, to peace.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.