

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWELFTH SESSION

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**Chairman: Mr. Djatal 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/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) (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. SMITH (Canada) said his Government agreed that the real issue before the Committee was not merely disarmament, but human survival. The Soviet Union's appeal was simple—to ban the use of nuclear weapons altogether, or for five years, and then to eliminate them entirely. But a disarmament agreement could not be based on mere promises; it must have real safeguards as well. Throughout the disarmament talks, the USSR had been reluctant to come to grips with the question of inspection. Nevertheless, although the deep suspicions which at present divided the nations made any agreement on inspection and controls difficult, countries whose intentions were genuinely peaceful should be able to accept that essential condition of disarmament, as his own country had done.

2. Even if the Powers were agreed in principle on the necessity for controls, there would be many questions of technical detail which would require clarification

and agreement, as the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had pointed out in the general debate in the Assembly (685th plenary meeting).

3. Canada, which was the only smaller country to have taken part in the work of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission, shared to some extent the point of the middle and smaller Powers and, like them, felt that it was time to come to grips with the real difficulties which now beset the disarmament negotiations, without recriminations or the revival of old controversies.

4. The Indian representative had commented (873rd meeting) on the absence from the twenty-four Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) of reference to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The explanation was that the draft resolution dealt with those limited objectives which could be achieved immediately or in the near future and, although the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons had not been abandoned, it could not be regarded as immediately attainable in the absence of means of inspection adequate to guarantee such an undertaking. The immediate responsibility of the Powers was to do whatever might be possible to decrease stockpiles of nuclear weapons and to ensure the use of fissionable materials for peaceful purposes. At the same time constructive efforts must continue through the United Nations to reduce world tension. While no political conditions were suggested for the first stage of disarmament, there was an unavoidable link between progress on disarmament and progress on the other difficult international issues which divided the world. The United Nations had already made a great contribution to world peace through the provision of neutral observation or inspection forces in troubled areas and should be ready to consider further action of that kind when the need arose.

5. There were many disarmament measures which were susceptible of inspection and control and which could genuinely add to international security because all countries agreeing to them could be reasonably sure that the other parties were fulfilling their obligations. Two such measures, the reduction in armed forces and conventional armaments and an agreement that all future production of fissionable materials should be solely for peaceful purposes, were included in the twenty-four-Power draft resolution. The draft also included two other measures which might do a great deal to allay present anxieties—the suspension of testing of nuclear weapons and some system of advance warning against surprise attack by means of reciprocal air and ground inspection. The Indian draft resolution regarding a scientific-technical commission to study the detailed problems of inspection and control (A/C.1/L.176/Rev.2) also merited careful examination, especially as regards the suspension of tests and systems for warning against surprise attack.

6. His delegation urged the adoption of the twenty-four-Power draft resolution, but did not maintain that the proposals it included were the only means by which progress could be made towards disarmament, and felt that its sponsors would be ready to improve it in any possible way.

7. His Government was unable to understand the Soviet delegation's indifference to the proposal to use all production of fissionable materials for peaceful purposes. It seemed strange that, despite the Soviet Union's many statements in favour of prohibiting atomic and hydrogen bombs, it was not more interested in finding a workable arrangement for stopping the manufacture of such weapons, particularly when such an arrangement would be preceded by the suspension of test explosions.

8. Particular attention had been devoted in the Committee to suggestions for the suspension of tests of nuclear weapons. It should be noted that the latest Western proposals in the Sub-Committee (DC/113, annex 5) did provide for suspension for two years and that the sponsors of those proposals had made a real effort to respond to the international concern about the testing of nuclear weapons. However, tests would inevitably continue unless some more fundamental action to reduce the present fear and tension in international relations was agreed upon and taken.

9. His plea to the great Powers was that a beginning at least must be made in actual measures of disarmament. While Canada had co-sponsored plans for partial disarmament, it did not regard them as the last word. Further negotiation was the duty of all. The experience and confidence gained from limited first steps in disarmament could lead on towards the goal all countries sought—the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

10. Mr. PALAMAS (Greece) said the absence of security in the world was due to the lack of progress in the field of international relations. The concept of national sovereignty must give ground before the need to establish an organized international society based on the supremacy of the common interest over the interests of individual communities. Many efforts had been made in the past to reduce national sovereignty to its proper proportions and to direct all international disputes into peaceful and lawful channels. The United Nations had not yet, however, paid due attention to that very important aspect of international life. Disarmament was only one way of moving towards peace, and the successful application of other methods would facilitate a solution in the field of disarmament. An organized community must be built which would have full authority over its members in certain fields. Such an institutional development, in which the security of all was guaranteed, would bring about gradual disarmament as its natural consequence. The creation of the United Nations Emergency Force represented a great step forward in that respect.

11. With regard to the specific problem of disarmament, his delegation felt that the only way in which the General Assembly could assist the progress of negotiations would be to ask the Powers chiefly concerned to continue those negotiations and to express the hope that they would in the end produce agreement. His delegation was aware that no Power would agree to any limitation of armaments which could result in a change in the existing balance of power to its dis-

advantage, and found that attitude understandable and legitimate. The extent to which the different proposals affected the defensive potentialities of the parties concerned was essentially a technical problem on which his delegation could express no opinion.

12. A greater measure of agreement seemed to exist with regard to the suspension of tests of nuclear weapons. If the coupling of the suspension of tests with the other points of a comprehensive plan of disarmament was the main obstacle to a partial agreement on the issue, it seemed to his delegation that the Western Powers might eventually consider the possibility of dealing with the issues separately. Even on that point, however, only a tentative agreement in principle had been reached and the many important points involved in its implementation and control had not yet been discussed. It was regrettable that a committee of experts had not been set up to do so. The establishment of an international body exercising authority even on so limited a scale as that entailed in supervising the suspension of atomic tests would constitute a starting point towards ensuring that the rights of the international community would prevail over the sovereign rights of States and might lead to a gradual broadening of the body's competence.

13. His delegation saw no possibility of improvement in the work of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission unless the great Powers themselves brought that improvement about, but felt that the Sub-Committee might be made more representative by being expanded. It was also in favour of the Belgian draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1).

14. Mr. SHTYLLA (Albania), reviewing the nefarious effects of the continued arms race, pointed out that, in an era when science and technology had opened the way to a future of abundance and contentment for all peoples, the State which provoked an atomic war would be guilty of the most heinous crime against humanity. He congratulated the Soviet scientists upon launching the first artificial satellite into outer space. That victory should spur science to new conquests and should encourage Governments to strengthen peaceful co-existence by developing trade and cultural exchanges and by solving the disputes between them by peaceful means with a view to the ultimate establishment of collective security.

15. Peace depended in the first place on an agreement between the great Powers to put an end to the arms race, and all States should direct their efforts towards that end. The Soviet Union had made constructive proposals in that respect, but the four Western Powers had merely used the negotiations as a smoke screen for their continuing military build-up. As a State whose peace policy was inherent in its socialist structure and whose people had suffered from three wars in less than thirty years, Albania supported the Soviet proposals. It was forced to remain vigilant, however, owing to the United States aggressive policy of so-called liberation of the socialist countries, the presence of United States standing armies in countries near Albania and the manoeuvres of the United States Sixth Fleet not far from Albanian territorial waters. The arms race was in fact the result of the United States "cold war" policy: it enabled the American monopolies to earn huge profits, to avert an economic crisis in the United States and to dominate other parts of the world. The establishment of the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization (NATO), the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and the Baghdad Pact, to prepare for a war against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, confirmed the United States policy of aggression. Although events had proved that policy to be unrealistic, the United States was persisting in it, as the recent threat of aggression against Syria showed.

16. The Soviet Union's positive proposals for disarmament differed substantially from the four-Power programme and it would be unrealistic to believe that the gap could be bridged easily. The Soviet Union proposed total disarmament, an immediate ban on tests of nuclear weapons, the unconditional prohibition of the use and production of nuclear weapons and a reduction of conventional armaments and the standing armies stationed in various countries. The West did not want effective disarmament; it sought only the regulation of armaments. It was opposed to a ban on nuclear weapons and it made all its proposals conditional on the solution of outstanding political issues. Despite that profound divergence of views, agreement was possible provided that both parties sincerely desired agreement and were prepared to negotiate on a footing of equality and make reciprocal concessions. The Soviet Union had made such concessions in the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission; however, once it had accepted the Western Powers' proposals, they had repudiated them and established fresh conditions unacceptable to the Soviet Union. They had given clear proof that they were not motivated by goodwill.

17. In the view of the Albanian delegation, the acceptance by both the Soviet Union and the four Western Powers of the idea of partial measures of disarmament constituted a common ground on which negotiations should proceed. That idea should be applied first to a separate agreement to ban tests of nuclear weapons for a period of two or three years under international control. The Western argument that the tests were necessary to its security, that they did not represent a measure of disarmament and that the adverse effects of radiation should be discounted was untenable. Despite the protests of the four Powers that the test ban was not disarmament, they had included it in their comprehensive programme; even if a general agreement on that programme was impossible, surely it was possible to agree on the one specific point. Moreover, the burden of scientific opinion and the facts themselves demonstrated that the harmful effects of fall-out were not negligible and that argument could not be invoked as a pretext to oppose a test ban.

18. As a second partial measure, a separate agreement should be made on the prohibition of the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons for an initial period of five years. Nuclear energy, all agreed, should be used only for peaceful purposes.

19. Finally, Albania supported the Soviet proposal for a reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons. A separate agreement on that point should deal with all stages of such a reduction and the transition from one stage to another should not be made conditional on the settlement of political issues such as the problems of Germany and the Middle East. Albania also supported the proposal in the Soviet memorandum (A/C.1/793) for the reduction of the armies of the four Powers in the NATO and Warsaw Treaty countries and also the

proposal made by Poland and Czechoslovakia in May 1957 to undertake not to produce or stockpile nuclear weapons provided that the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany did likewise. Albania further deplored the tendency of the Western Powers to transform the negotiations on disarmament into detailed discussions of various systems of control and inspection. It was disarmament which all States sought and such discussions did not lead to agreement on that vital issue. By adopting the Soviet proposals on the three partial measures he had enumerated, the Assembly would be contributing greatly to agreement among the great Powers and would restore hope to the peoples of the world.

20. Mr. PICCIONI (Italy) emphasized that if the Assembly failed to bring nearer an agreement on disarmament, one of the principal purposes of the United Nations would have become meaningless.

21. While Italy was not represented in the Disarmament Commission or on its Sub-Committee, it had had an opportunity of presenting its views on the problem in the course of consultations between the four Powers and the other NATO countries. The policy of NATO was based on the defence of freedom and independence, and the organization operated in a spirit of full co-operation between the members.

22. An agreement between the great Powers on disarmament would re-establish the atmosphere of international confidence without which no problems could be resolved and no State could feel itself secure. Progress towards such an agreement had been made in the Sub-Committee. Unfortunately, instead of responding to the United States representative's enumeration (866th meeting) of the five concessions made by the Soviet Union during the early part of the London meetings of the Sub-Committee by a recognition of the concessions made by the West, the Soviet representative in his statement (867th meeting) had made a propaganda attack designed to place responsibility for the failure of the London talks on the Western Powers. The Soviet Union apparently did not comprehend the political impact of an agreement on disarmament. Its purpose seemed to be to deprive the West of its means of defence and to make a number of declarations of intention which were valueless unless effective control were established by an international authority. No State was prepared to give up its means of defence unless it felt secure from surprise attack. No State was prepared to subscribe to a pledge not to use nuclear weapons unless it was assured of effective international control. The great Powers, with their tremendous industrial and military potential, possessed some guarantee of security, but the small and medium-sized States without such potential had to insist on effective control in the interests of their security. The events following the Second World War, in particular the threats of Soviet aggression and the abortive Hungarian uprising, should make such insistence even more categorical. It was clear that the Soviet Government refused to accept the control of an international authority as a matter of principle; it refused to recognize it as morally superior or impartial and saw in it only a foreign group threatening its security.

23. Italy strongly favoured the proposal for a ban on nuclear tests under international control: it was the first point on which agreement should be sought. Such

a ban was not yet disarmament, however, because it did not eliminate the danger of existing stocks of nuclear weapons and of future production of those already perfected.

24. Italy was also deeply concerned by the effects of atomic radiation. Apart from any other agreement, the States carrying out nuclear tests should consent to an investigation of the effects of the tests by a United Nations scientific committee. The United States had declared itself in favour of such control of tests, but nothing had been heard on the subject from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union must realize that the unilateral acceptance of control and investigation by the United States or by the four Powers acting as one party would lead world opinion to draw the inevitable conclusions regarding the good faith of the Soviet proposals.

25. Progress towards agreement on disarmament could be expected to be slow and unspectacular. The Assembly should nevertheless urge a continuation of negotiations and the renouncing of the use of propaganda. The primary consideration of all States should be that the goal of disarmament was to strengthen the security of countries which did not possess the resources for ensuring their own security. The Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee should continue their efforts to prepare the way for an agreement to be reached on the basis of the twenty-four Power draft resolution.

26. Mr. PENN-NOUTH (Cambodia) referred to the statement of his delegation on 26 September 1957 in the General Assembly (689th plenary meeting) expressing hope for a positive solution of the problem of disarmament during the current session. The people of Cambodia and of the entire world eagerly awaited action by the United Nations.

27. He addressed an urgent appeal to the great Powers which controlled the destiny of the world. The

peace-loving people of Cambodia feared the horrors of war in general and of atomic war in particular. The Government of Cambodia maintained its officially stated position favouring any attempt at international agreement to suspend tests of nuclear weapons and to prohibit the use of atomic weapons.

28. While there seemed to be general agreement on the need for suspending nuclear tests and stopping the production of fissionable materials for military purposes, the Powers possessing atomic weapons had so far been unable to work out a formula acceptable to all. It was understandable that, despite their sincere desire for a prompt solution of that serious problem, those Powers should seek a carefully prepared agreement which avoid unpleasant and perhaps costly surprises. In the opinion of the Cambodian delegation, the only obstacle to an immediate agreement was lack of confidence. He called upon the great Powers to do their utmost to achieve a minimum of mutual confidence as a basis for agreement.

29. The Cambodian delegation had avoided taking a position in favour of any given draft resolution because it wished to have no part whatever in perpetuating the system of two opposing views which was perhaps at the root of the distrust among the great Powers. A problem as important as disarmament could not be resolved by seeking a greater or lesser majority vote in favour of any draft resolution. His delegation would therefore remain neutral in the matter and would support the draft resolution it judged most likely to relax international tension and promote world peace. Above all he urged the great Powers in particular to find a way of re-establishing international confidence, without which progress was impossible.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.