

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWELFTH SESSION

Official Records



Friday, 1 November 1957,
at 3.20 p. m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
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 (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	107

Chairman: Mr. Djalal 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.1/797, A/C.1/L.174, A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.176/Rev.4, A/C.1/L.177, A/C.1/L.178/Rev.2, A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.180, A/C.1/L.181, A/C.1/L.182) (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. BLANCO (Cuba) pointed out that his delegation had co-sponsored the twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) and would vote for it because it represented the most adequate basis for agreement and because it contained no provision which might jeopardize the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union.

2. Cuba would also support the Belgian draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1). That proposal, by providing that collective action should be taken under United Nations auspices, as negotiations between the great Powers proceeded, to inform the world of the effects of the arms race and the need for international control, would be making a fresh contribution to a solution of the disarmament deadlock. It would be the responsibility of

the United Nations to ensure that information, untainted by political or ideological considerations, reached all peoples, and that no Member State would distort such information to serve its political ends. When the suggestions of the Secretary-General and Member States regarding the procedure for giving effect to the dissemination of such information had been received, the whole question should be considered by the Disarmament Commission.

3. Although Cuba was in sympathy with the Japanese draft resolution (A/C.1/L.174), it could not support it because it isolated the question of a suspension of nuclear test explosions from the over-all programme of disarmament. Moreover, the question was adequately covered by paragraph 1 (a) of the twenty-four Power draft resolution. For the same reasons, Cuba could not support the Indian draft regarding a suspension of nuclear test explosions (A/C.1/L.176/Rev.4). Nor could it vote for the Indian text favouring expansion in the membership of existing disarmament organs (A/C.1/L.177) because a larger membership would increase the difficulties in reaching agreement. It was the view of the Cuban delegation that, in the present circumstances, the twenty-four Power draft resolution was the only one capable of promoting progress towards partial and balanced disarmament, which would eventually restore confidence and security to all States.

4. Mr. SERRANO (Chile) said that his delegation had carefully studied the four-Power proposals submitted to the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in London on 29 August 1957 (DC/113, annex 5), and considered that they were the most reasonable and realistic proposals on disarmament put forward in the United Nations since the Baruch Plan. His delegation had consequently been a co-sponsor of the twenty-four Power draft resolution, which was based essentially on those proposals.

5. Chile favoured the discontinuance of tests of atomic and hydrogen bombs. In that connexion his delegation had been much impressed by the arguments of the representatives of the United States (866th meeting) and the United Kingdom (869th meeting). For that reason, it desired much more than a mere suspension of those tests, which would leave open the more serious danger of the uncontrolled manufacture of all kinds of aggressive weapons.

6. His delegation was firmly convinced that the General Assembly should insist on the continuation of the disarmament negotiations initiated by the Sub-Committee, at the meetings of which appreciable and encouraging progress had been made. It also felt that they should be continued by the Powers which were primarily responsible for them, and it had hopes that they would lead to an agreement, for no Government in the world could totally ignore the public outcry against the armaments race.

7. A sense of urgency must be imparted to the question of disarmament, for there was a danger that the world would grow accustomed to the armaments race, which was sapping the foundations of contemporary civilization. His delegation would therefore vote in favour of the Belgian draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1), the fundamental importance of which could not be exaggerated and which deserved to be given priority. The Belgian draft should be given wide attention in the world Press, for it was not merely one more draft resolution, but a firm proposal to use all possible information media for a campaign which should be given national scope in all the States Members of the United Nations.

8. The General Assembly had just witnessed in the case of the agenda item "Complaint about threats to the security of Syria and to international peace", an example of the power of conciliation and of the important part that small countries without great military strength could play in negotiations. The manner in which the Syrian complaint had been handled should serve as an example and a source of hope. The Committee should not be an arena in which the great Powers demonstrated their strength or made propaganda gestures, but one in which they showed their flexibility, their imagination and their ability to achieve positive results.

9. Mr. SASTROAMIDJOJO (Indonesia) supported the suggestion made by the representatives of Ecuador (882nd meeting) and Mexico (884th meeting) that an effort should be made to draft a single resolution on disarmament which the Committee could approve unanimously. He agreed that a mere majority vote for one or another proposal could only emphasize the existing differences, while a draft resolution on which the great Powers agreed would have a salutary effect on future negotiations in the Sub-Committee. Although such a draft resolution could not eliminate present differences, it would guide the resumed negotiations in the direction of narrowing, rather than emphasizing, differences.

10. His delegation considered that the Yugoslav draft resolution (A/C.1/L.180), which seemed to come closest to combining the proposals of the Western Powers, the Soviet Union, India and Japan, might serve as a basis for further efforts to draft a single resolution. It was a sincere effort to bring together all the points of agreement and at the same time to set out objectively and in the way most conducive to conciliation those items on which agreement must still be reached. The draft resolution specifically mentioned the universal desire of nations to achieve a general agreement on disarmament which would include the total prohibition of the production and use of nuclear weapons and the elimination of stocks of such weapons. In the operative part it listed the items on which the members of the Sub-Committee were urged to seek an agreement, including those mentioned in the twenty-four Power draft resolution. Finally, it included a request that the Sub-Committee should seek, as a matter of priority, agreement on an immediate cessation of tests of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, with the necessary measures of control.

11. Some of the provisions of that draft resolution might be amplified; in particular, his delegation felt that a single draft resolution on disarmament should include a provision for enlarging the composition of

the Sub-Committee by including representatives from two or three small countries, whose function would be to help the great Powers reach agreement. Although his delegation had some sympathy with the basic purpose of the Soviet draft resolution to establish a permanent disarmament commission of all Members of the United Nations (A/C.1/797), it felt that agreement on disarmament could best be achieved by expanding the membership of the Sub-Committee and, as was also requested in the Yugoslav draft resolution, by convening a special session of the General Assembly to consider the disarmament problem when that was considered advisable in the light of the progress achieved. That procedure would be similar to the one adopted in establishing the International Atomic Energy Agency, which had proved to be conducive to agreement.

12. The primary task of the Assembly must be to help to reconcile differences on a matter which was of vital concern to mankind. It could do that by making an effort to draft a single resolution which would reflect unanimity rather than a majority view.

13. Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan) said that his delegation found it difficult to accept wholeheartedly the twenty-four-Power draft resolution because it would make the suspension of tests of nuclear weapons conditional on agreement on the other aspects of a disarmament programme. In that connexion, he recalled the views expressed by the representatives of Canada (878th meeting), Sweden (884th meeting), Norway (884th meeting) and Israel (883rd meeting) that greater flexibility should be given to that draft. Moreover, Japan would go further than the twenty-four Powers: instead of having the Assembly merely transmit its desires to the Sub-Committee regarding all the points on which it should seek agreement, Japan would have the Assembly express its determination, by a specific resolution, that agreement should be reached on one essential point: the suspension of nuclear tests.

14. The Japanese delegation would vote in favour of the Yugoslav draft resolution (A/C.1/L.180) because, while it was comprehensive, it singled out the suspension of tests for priority agreement. Considering the Indian draft resolution on the suspension of tests (A/C.1/L.176/Rev.4) in connexion with the Indian draft resolution on general disarmament (A/C.1/L.178/Rev.2), the Japanese delegation shared and welcomed the basic attitude of the Indian delegation on the matter. With regard to the Indian draft resolution on the organs dealing with disarmament (A/C.1/L.177), the Japanese delegation favoured an increase in the membership of the Disarmament Commission, but it considered that the Sub-Committee should not be expanded because it was essentially a negotiating body. With regard to the Soviet Union draft resolution contained in document A/3674/Rev.1, Japan strongly hoped that the Soviet Union would take further steps towards the other goals of disarmament and would welcome the Japanese draft. Japan supported the Belgian draft resolution unreservedly.

15. The Japanese draft resolution (A/C.1/L.174) provided a meeting ground for the opposing Powers and was a realistic and practical basis for compromise which did not prejudice the security of any State and which would facilitate agreement on complete or partial disarmament. Its acceptance by both sides would be a token of their good faith, and with that good faith established, they could more easily make progress on

other aspects of disarmament; on the basis of such progress, the Assembly would find it easier to obtain an extension of the period of suspension of tests at its thirteenth session.

16. Mr. SANDLER (Sweden) said that his delegation viewed the Japanese draft resolution with particular sympathy. It called for a temporary suspension of nuclear test explosions as a first step, and at the same time recommended preparatory work on a series of other measures without insisting on their interdependence. While Sweden would have preferred a longer period of suspension, it found it reasonable that the Assembly should be asked to decide whether the suspension should continue after expiration of the initial time limit.

17. With regard to the scientific exchange of views between the French and Indian representatives at previous meetings, he pointed out, citing the summary of hearings held by the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy of the United States Congress,^{1/} that estimates of a reasonable future permissible annual release of fission products from indefinitely continued testing ranged from about two to ten megatons equivalent per year, and that a value to narrow that range had not been arrived at. In view of the yield of nuclear explosions already produced by the Powers conducting tests, those conclusions were not at all reassuring.

18. In any consideration of changes in the membership of existing disarmament organs, full account should be taken of the fact that the country with the largest or second largest army in the world was excluded from the negotiations. Since the time had apparently not yet come for a change in that situation, the First Committee might well ponder the desirability of modifying the composition of those organs.

19. Mr. VELA (Guatemala) noted that there was unanimous agreement among States that a special effort must be made to achieve agreement on disarmament in response to the clamour of world public opinion, and that some encouragement could be drawn from the fact that there had been some narrowing of differences between the Powers principally concerned as a result of the Sub-Committee's discussions. If those Powers were to pledge themselves to suspend nuclear weapons tests temporarily, they would be doing much to allay fears and restore international confidence, particularly if that pledge was followed by guarantees as to its fulfilment. The negotiations were hampered by the attempt to use them for domestic consumption or, on an international level, for propaganda purposes. If it was to ease the deadlock on disarmament, the General Assembly would have to adopt an effective resolution, if possible, with unanimous support.

20. Scientific and technological advances made the use of nuclear and conventional weapons equally dangerous; both types of armaments would have to be prescribed at the same time. Moreover, although there were differences of opinion among scientists regarding the harmful effects of radiation and the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had not yet been submitted,

^{1/} United States Congress, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Summary-Analysis of Hearings, May 27-29, and June 3-7, 1957, on the Nature of Radioactive Fallout and its Effects on Man, 85th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1957).

so long as there was any doubt Guatemala was inclined to support a suspension of nuclear tests. A test ban might be the first point on which unanimous agreement could be reached. It would represent a substantial concession on the part of the Powers which attributed great value to the tests for defensive purposes.

21. Guatemala would abstain or vote against the Soviet draft resolution proposing a five-year ban on the use of nuclear weapons (A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1) because it was in conflict with the policy of the Western Powers, which were pledged to use those weapons exclusively for purposes of self-defence. It was for the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee to work out the complexities of that problem and agree on a solution.

22. Similarly, although it agreed with the statements in their preambles, Guatemala could not support the Indian draft resolutions (A/C.1/L.177 and A/C.1/L.178/Rev.2). Expansion of existing disarmament organs served the purpose of a more adequate composition, but the operative paragraphs were not clear. On the other hand, the establishment of additional organs would not resolve the deadlock between the Powers principally concerned and might create greater difficulties in reaching agreement. It was not fair to attribute the lack of progress on disarmament to the existing United Nations machinery; its cause should be sought rather in the lack of confidence among the great Powers.

23. Guatemala would support the amendment submitted by the Latin-American countries (A/C.1/L.181) for the inclusion in the twenty-four Power draft of a paragraph calling for the diversion of savings resulting from disarmament to the economic development of the under-developed countries. It was in line with past Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions.

24. He did not know to what extent the Soviet proposal for a permanent disarmament commission consisting of all Member States (A/C.1/797) would lead to agreement on technical matters. Moreover, his delegation had not had time to weigh the implications of that proposal and of the revisions effected in some of the other draft resolutions before the Committee. It therefore reserved its position on them.

25. Guatemala was in sympathy with the Belgian draft resolution. The information provided should be objective and impartial; the dissemination of such information was contingent upon the establishment of genuine freedom of information, a goal which had long been under discussion in the Third Committee. Without such freedom of information, the proposal might be deformed by propaganda.

26. Finally, Guatemala would vote for the twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) because it had been said that it was not perfect or inflexible and it provided a good basis for further negotiation and a practical step towards a compromise solution. On that basis, mutual concessions would have to be made, taking into account the interests of peace and the minimum security of the States involved. It could be effective, however, only if it was approved unanimously or by a very substantial majority as a set of guiding principles for the Sub-Committee.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.