

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWELFTH SESSION

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Chairman: Mr. Djatal ABDOL (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. TRUJILLO (Ecuador) said that so long as States had not transferred all their sovereignty to some universal body they would need armaments to preserve internal and international peace. The Charter of the United Nations provided in its Preamble that armed force should not be used, save in the common interest, i.e. for international peace and security.

2. It had often been said that the great obstacle to disarmament was the lack of confidence between States. However, there was another great obstacle which stood in the way of disarmament, to the extent

that disarmament was possible and logical: national pride, which led nations to glory in their military achievements and their might. Although his delegation had not previously taken that position, recent events had convinced it that the time had come for the smaller countries, and the opinion of mankind as a whole, to play a bigger part in the disarmament discussions. All peoples would suffer the consequences of an atomic war or of any war in which weapons of mass destruction would be used. His delegation therefore considered that the Disarmament Commission or its Sub-Committee might be enlarged to include the representatives of other sections of opinion. For the same reason it supported the Belgian draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1), for it felt that, once the peoples of the world properly understood the dangers involved in the use of nuclear weapons, they would prove to be a great force in favour of disarmament.

3. With regard to the draft resolutions submitted by Japan (A/C.1/L.174) and India (A/C.1/L.176/Rev.2, A/C.1/L.177 and A/C.1/L.178/Rev.1), he could not entirely agree with the French representative's statement (877th meeting) that it was not a question of increasing or decreasing the membership of the Commission or its Sub-Committee, but that what was really needed was unity of thought on the part of those Powers which had economic, military and atomic secrets in their hands.

4. Another means of bringing the opinion of the smaller countries and the peoples of the world to bear on disarmament negotiations had been suggested (699th plenary meeting) by the Mexican representative, who had proposed that a commissioner should be appointed to act as a mediator in the negotiations. His delegation considered that that suggestion should be adopted.

5. The question of the suspension of tests of nuclear weapons was one on which the great Powers must heed the wishes of the peoples. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1), of which his delegation was a co-sponsor, partly met that need. An agreement on the suspension of nuclear tests could not, however, be discussed in isolation, for if it were separated from the other five points listed in the draft resolution, all of which were closely related, no lasting benefit would result.

6. The six points listed in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution were offered as suggestions which would guide the Disarmament Commission, in its future work, towards real disarmament. They were not empty propaganda gestures. Although the twenty-four-Power draft resolution might not receive unanimous support, it should be approved.

7. However, the delegation of Ecuador felt that an attempt must be made to seek a solution which could be adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. It

therefore proposed that as soon as the general debate had been concluded the Committee should appoint a working party, composed of the members of the Sub-Committee and the representatives of Japan and India, to make a final effort to draft a resolution on which all States could agree and which would combine the draft resolutions submitted by Japan, the USSR (A/3674/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1), India and the twenty-four Powers which were now before the Committee; furthermore, the Mexican representative or the Chairman or some other representative of good will should be appointed to act as the co-ordinator of the working party's efforts.

8. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) said that the problem of disarmament acutely affected every aspect of life in all countries of the world. The question of disarmament was extremely complicated because it was closely linked with many other serious and difficult problems in a cause and effect relationship.

9. Although it was frequently claimed that world peace depended on disarmament and that there could be no peace without it, his delegation felt rather that disarmament depended on peace. Accumulation of armaments need not inevitably lead to war. Granted that military preparedness might make it easier to wage war, the causes of armed conflict and the reasons for the failure to reach an agreement on disarmament must be sought elsewhere. If the serious conflicts which divided the world could be resolved, and if confidence and good faith could replace fear and suspicion in international relations, disarmament would follow in the natural course of events because nations would have no need for arms. It was therefore pointless to strive for disarmament without first creating an atmosphere of international confidence which would inspire the great Powers to abandon arms as unnecessary.

10. It was interesting to note that Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations linked "the maintenance of peace" to "reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations", while the United Nations Charter adopted a more realistic criterion and in Article 26 referred to "a system for the regulation of armaments". Furthermore, Article 26 of the Charter referred to the "regulation of armaments" as a means of promoting the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security rather than as the determining factor in achieving that end. That Article of the Charter also called for "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources" with the obvious intent that those resources should be employed in furthering the purposes of the United Nations, particularly the solution of "international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character". Finally, Article 55 of the Charter noted that international economic and social co-operation was intended to further the cause of peace.

11. General Assembly resolution 380 (V), entitled "Peace through deeds", gave further support to the view that the achievement of peace would be the decisive factor in disarmament. Needless to say, confidence was absolutely essential, but it was important to remember that confidence was not created by words and promises or even by the signing of international undertakings.

12. The thesis that disarmament would be a result of the establishment of peace was not intended to disparage the effort being made to reconcile the various positions on disarmament. Nor did the delegation of Panama wish to imply that the organs dealing with disarmament served no purpose. The Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee should certainly be maintained, as they had made and would continue to make important contributions in clarifying positions on disarmament. The structure of those bodies should remain unchanged.

13. During the present debate on disarmament, the small nations had expressed their concern at the impasse which had been reached. His delegation felt that the only possibility was the continuation of negotiations between the great Powers in the hope of achieving an agreement acceptable to both sides, re-establishing confidence and assuring human survival. The primary task of the First Committee and the General Assembly should be to seek agreement and thus pave the way towards understanding and harmony. The representatives of the United States (866th meeting) and of the Soviet Union (867th meeting) had both expressed the hope that agreement on disarmament would prove possible at the current session of the General Assembly. It was, however, important to note that purely procedural measures would not represent progress, for important substantive questions were at stake. The representative of France had very aptly pointed out the danger involved in trying to escape from the existing impasse by means of mere procedural stratagems.

14. The head of the Mexican delegation had put forward a proposal which warranted careful study by the Assembly: the appointment by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Sub-Committee of an impartial United Nations commissioner for disarmament. He would have the task of examining the practicability of the various proposals and of assisting the parties in their negotiations, and he would privately submit to them his own suggestions for narrowing differences and reaching agreement. Such mediation exercised on behalf of the United Nations might encourage the opposing Powers to make reciprocal concessions and ultimately to achieve the objectives of disarmament.

15. Reviewing the main points of the Western proposals (DC/113, annex 5) and the Soviet proposals for the immediate and unconditional discontinuance of nuclear tests, he expressed the opinion that the Soviet Government was subordinating the interests of peace to a propaganda campaign built around the slogan "ban the bomb". Yet it was clear that such a ban could not be imposed without effective international control, a condition which the Soviet Government rejected. The General Assembly, in addition to endorsing international control as a precondition of disarmament, should give careful study to the proposal for the limitation or reduction of armed forces and armaments, to the subject of economic disarmament with all the problems of economic dislocation it might raise for the major industrial Powers, and to the question of strategic disarmament, that is, the withdrawal of arms and armies from various areas of the world. The General Assembly should, in view of the above considerations, approve the draft resolution sponsored by twenty-four delegations, including the delegation of Panama.

16. He considered that the Indian draft resolution for increasing the membership of the Disarmament Commission and of its Sub-Committee (A/C.1/L.177) was not practicable in existing circumstances. He quoted the various Assembly resolutions establishing the two organs, as well as Articles 11, 24 and 26 of the Charter in order to demonstrate the close relationship between the Security Council and the Assembly in matters of disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and to stress the important consideration that the composition of the Disarmament Commission should so far as possible be identical with that of the Security Council. Moreover, Panama was strongly opposed to any change in the membership of the Sub-Committee effected without the consent of the four Western Powers.

17. Before the differences with the four Powers could be further narrowed, the Soviet Union would have to contribute, by its acts, to a restoration of mutual confidence. The United States had repeatedly demonstrated its desire to reduce its military potential and dedicate itself to peace; it was concerned, however, to obtain guarantees that the Soviet Union would do likewise, for disarmament could not be unilateral. It had learned by experience that military preparedness was the best means of dissuading potential aggressors. Having cut its armed forces and its military budget following the war, it had been taken by surprise by the events in Eastern Europe and the attack on Korea. It could not now unconditionally destroy its nuclear weapons stocks, without effective international control and inspection, because it would be giving the Soviet Union, with its huge resources in armed forces, to which must be added those of Communist China, an unfair advantage. Similarly, without an accurate system of inspection of the kind suggested in the "open skies" proposal (DC/71, annex 17), there was no way of detecting military build-ups such as that which had taken place in Korea. Finally, as the representative of France, Mr. Moch, had pointed out, a Western withdrawal in Europe would mean a withdrawal of some 3,000 miles across the ocean while the Soviet forces would have to move only a few hundred miles eastward. In that connexion, the Assembly might be well advised to take into account opinion in a neutral State such as Switzerland. An article in the Swiss Press had pointed out that the withdrawal of United States forces from areas of Europe vulnerable to Soviet attack would deprive those areas

of any system of peripheral defence and expose them to the most dangerous imperialism.

18. The reunification of Germany was a fundamental consideration in any disarmament negotiations. It should be noted that the Western Powers had never demanded, as a precondition of reunification, that a unified Germany should join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On the other hand, they were not prepared to enter into a disarmament agreement which would prejudice solution of the unification issue. The people of Germany should be allowed to exercise their right of self-determination, but it was only through an agreement between the three Western Powers concerned and the Soviet Union that the German people would find the way opened to that national unity to which they were entitled.

19. The Panamanian delegation wished to stress that it attached the greatest importance to economic development as an instrument for achieving peace and for maintaining it. Chapter IX of the Charter and the Assembly resolutions relating to the establishment of the Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED) emphasized the absolute interdependence of disarmament and economic and social progress. Resolution 724 A (VIII) had been particularly explicit in that regard: Member States had subscribed to a declaration pledging themselves to make available to an international fund part of the savings effected as a result of disarmament in order to assist in the development and reconstruction of the under-developed countries of the world. Unfortunately, no real progress had yet been made towards making SUNFED a reality, although it was manifestly clear that, unless the economic, social and educational backwardness of many peoples was eliminated, there could be no peace and security. Panama held that that consideration in itself constituted the most forceful appeal for an end to the arms race and continued to hope that agreement on disarmament would be achieved.

20. Commenting briefly on the draft resolutions before the Committee, he noted that the Belgian draft resolution deserved unanimous support and that the Japanese draft resolution should be given the most careful study.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.