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MEETING**

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**Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).**

**AGENDA ITEMS 64, 70 AND 72**

**Question of disarmament (A/3929, A/3936, A/C.1/L.205) (*continued*)**

**The discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests (A/3915, A/C.1/L.202/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.203, A/C.1/L.205) (*continued*)**

**The reduction of the military budgets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France by 10 to 15 per cent and the use of part of the savings so effected for assistance to the under-developed countries (A/3925, A/C.1/L.204, A/C.1/L.205) (*continued*)**

**GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)**

1. Mr. COOPER (Liberia) attributed the failure to make progress towards a solution of the disarmament problem to the continued lack of confidence between States, which, as the Secretary-General had pointed out in his memorandum, was one of the major causes of fear, suspicion and international tension (A/3936, para. 3). He saw few signs to justify optimism: there had been no disarmament for more than a decade, and larger and more powerful weapons of destruction had now become the pride of many of the great Powers.

2. While the world inevitably looked to the United Nations for a solution of the problem, the little nations had been compelled to ally themselves with one side or the other or to remain in a semi-neutral position, realizing there was little they could do except by persuasion or appeal to moral principles. It was doubtful whether such persuasion or appeal could have any effect, since it was the right and duty of each State, particularly each great Power, to decide what measures it considered necessary in the interests of its own national security. In the circumstances, it was unfair to attribute the failure on disarmament to the United Nations as a whole.

3. The question of national security had become archaic in an era when the range and destructive power of weapons knew no territorial limits and the security of any single country extended far beyond its frontiers. The great Powers themselves had recognized that fact by deploying their armed forces and weapons over the entire globe. They, and all nations, must also recognize the corollary: what measures of disarmament were taken must be for the survival of the human race. History showed, however, that in a world divided into two power blocs, disarmament was impossible.

4. It was disheartening to find that prejudices and suspicions were already beginning to negate the agreement reached by the Conference of Experts to study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests, held at Geneva in July and August 1958. There was argument, for example, whether the negotiations to implement the conclusions of the experts should be conducted by foreign ministers or by ambassadors. That was an illogical technicality: the representatives of the Powers concerned, regardless of their rank, would inevitably be speaking on instructions from their Governments. Moreover, even in the period before the proposed negotiations, further testing of nuclear weapons was being carried out, on the ground that parity in testing had to be achieved.

5. Nevertheless, Liberia welcomed the draft resolutions tabled on the suspension of tests, especially that submitted by the Indian and twelve other delegations (A/C.1/L.202/Rev.1 and Add.1), and hoped that they would be implemented. Suspension or discontinuance would be meaningless, however, unless accompanied by effective measures for the banning or control of nuclear weapons.

6. Similarly, a reduction in the conventional armaments and armed forces of the great Powers, although it would be a step in the direction of world disarmament, would do little to relieve anxiety so long as those Powers continued to stockpile nuclear weapons and to experiment with new destructive devices. In a nuclear war, conventional armaments would be obsolete. An agreement on conventional armaments and armed forces would have practical value only if it was a step on the road to an agreement on the control of nuclear weapons.

7. Liberia recognized that States could not be persuaded to abandon nuclear weapons and tests of new devices so long as they considered them to be necessary for their defence or security. It also recognized that, in the absence of great-Power agreement on the control or prohibition of such weapons, other States, in the interests of self-preservation, felt justified in undertaking their manufacture and testing. Nevertheless, Liberia strongly objected to the testing of such weapons in the Sahara or in any other part of Africa or

on any continent inhabited by people whose lands were far removed from the "nuclear Powers".

8. His delegation welcomed the suggestions made by the United States and others for agreement on the control of outer space and was confident that comprehensive agreement on the subject would be attainable once agreement had been reached on the control of nuclear weapons.

9. The Committee should realistically face the fact that any resolution it adopted on any aspect of disarmament must obtain the approval of all the Powers, producing nuclear weapons. If it could not obtain that approval, the wisest course would be for the Committee to conclude its debate on disarmament without adopting any resolution at all. A resolution on which the "nuclear Powers" were divided would jeopardize the prospects of the Geneva negotiations scheduled to begin on 31 October 1958.

10. His delegation believed that no foolproof agreement on disarmament could ever be achieved, owing to new discoveries and the development of more improved weapons. The only hope was that man would come to realize that the most effective form of disarmament was his knowledge that any global war would mean his extinction.

11. Mr. UNDEN (Sweden), discussing the draft resolutions dealing with the discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, pointed out that they were couched in very cautious terms and avoided mention of controversial questions. Indeed, his delegation could agree with practically everything that was said in them.

12. Surely, there could be no objection to the appeal in the seventeen-Power draft (A/C.1/L.205) that the parties to the forthcoming Geneva negotiations should make every effort to reach agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests under effective international control. The USSR's objection to the use of the word "suspension" as implying a temporary measure could be overcome by the substitution of the word "discontinuance". Moreover, nothing in the seventeen-Power text specifically stated that a future agreement should be in force for only one year at a time: that was a position that had been indicated in diplomatic notes and orally during the debate. The draft also contained an appeal to the negotiating Powers not to undertake further testing while the talks were in progress, obviously to ensure that a suspension of tests should go into effect on 31 October 1958 when the talks were scheduled to begin. While it was true that the other two draft resolutions called for "immediate" discontinuance of testing, the difference was slight since it was now already past mid-October.

13. With regard to the USSR draft resolution (A/C.1/L.203), the Soviet argument that the discontinuance of tests should be permanent had not found expression in the text; the recommendation that the States possessing nuclear weapons should enter into negotiations with a view to the conclusion of an appropriate agreement coincided with the corresponding desire stated in the seventeen-Power text; and only the appeal in the USSR text that all States should accede to that agreement had no counterpart in the seventeen-Power draft. Lastly, the USSR text made no direct reference to the recent technical talks on the possibility of detecting violations of an agreement on the suspension of tests or to the forthcoming Geneva conference. Nor did it contain any

reference to the function of the United Nations at that conference.

14. The thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.202/Rev.1 and Add.1) was more precise in its operative paragraphs than either of the other two texts. Moreover, it contained a recommendation to States which did not yet possess nuclear weapons to desist from embarking on tests pending action by the Assembly to extend the operation of the agreement to all States.

15. He concluded that, as far as the question of tests was concerned, the three texts were not basically at variance with each other and that it would be a difficult problem to choose between them in the voting, especially as it would not be clear to what extent a vote in favour of a draft resolution implied acceptance of a position taken by its sponsors in debate, but not specifically stated in the text itself. In the circumstances, he would welcome a common text worked out on the basis of the three draft resolutions which could be adopted as a separate resolution on nuclear weapons tests, emphasizing to world opinion that on that point it was hoped to come closer to a result than on other disarmament questions.

16. The Swedish delegation had no objections to sections II, III and IV of the seventeen-Power draft, and especially appreciated section IV, dealing with the participation of the Secretary-General in the discussions on disarmament problems.

17. His delegation would be unable to vote at the present session in favour of the Soviet Union draft resolution on the reduction of the military budgets of the four great Powers (A/C.1/L.204), though sympathizing with the underlying idea. The views on the matter of the three other States concerned were unknown, and the text did not indicate the norms for comparison between the various budgets. The question of an agreed reduction of military budgets required technical study. Such a study would certainly facilitate a future political decision.

18. Mr. VIDIC (Yugoslavia) said that the continuing and increasingly dangerous armaments race was a cause of justified concern to all; never in history had an arms race failed to lead ultimately to war. It was essential to undertake action that would lead to some initial progress, however modest, in the matter of disarmament.

19. The headway made during the past year, particularly with regard to the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, should be welcomed and acknowledged. The very important decision of the USSR to suspend its nuclear tests conditionally had been applauded throughout the world. The stated readiness of the United States and the United Kingdom unilaterally to suspend tests under certain conditions was also to be welcomed, although the real value of that offer, in the light of the urgent need to find a lasting solution, was problematic. The consensus reached at the recent Conference of Experts regarding control measures for the implementation of an agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests and the decision to hold a conference for the purpose of reaching such an agreement were most encouraging for the future.

20. His delegation believed that a lasting discontinuance of nuclear tests was indispensable and that an agreement to that effect should be reached. Moreover,

it was convinced that it would be both unjustified and harmful to make the conclusion of such an agreement dependent upon any conditions. By its inherent logic, such an agreement would lead to other even more significant and far-reaching solutions in the field of disarmament and in other areas of international relations. The argument that the General Assembly should not prejudice the outcome of an issue which had yet to be negotiated could not be regarded as valid with respect to issues which were not the exclusive concern of the future negotiators, nor could the security interests of the negotiating countries be adduced as an argument against the immediate conclusion of a lasting agreement, for what was at stake was the security of the international community as a whole.

21. Since the Yugoslav delegation had faith in the intentions of all the participants in the forthcoming Geneva conference, it assumed that they would discontinue nuclear tests after 31 October 1958. All the representatives of the "nuclear Powers" had assured the Committee that they would endeavour to reach agreement. The least the United Nations could ask, therefore, was that tests should be discontinued until an agreement was reached and that everything possible should be done to achieve it.

22. His delegation considered that the proposed system of control should be set up within the framework of the United Nations. Such an arrangement would be natural in view of the scope and international character of the proposed system and the need to link it, as a form of international co-operation, with the United Nations. Moreover, such an arrangement would meet the natural desire of all the countries participating in the system to have it operate under the permanent control of the appropriate United Nations bodies and within the general sphere of their competence. For those reasons, his delegation supported the view of the matter expressed by the Secretary-General in his memorandum (A/3936, para.6).

23. Progress with regard to the question of nuclear weapons tests was now objectively feasible. His delegation could therefore see no justification for any attempt to rely on the manipulation of majorities in the Committee or for concentrating attention on the propaganda elements of the question.

24. The agreement to hold a meeting of a group of experts to study safeguards against surprise attack, scheduled to begin on 10 November 1958, was another step forward in the field of disarmament. Agreement on such measures might well strengthen mutual confidence and improve the international atmosphere. However, the question was not the concern merely of the countries belonging to the existing military alignments; real progress could be achieved only through the co-operation and participation of other countries as well. It accordingly seemed obvious that a more broadly representative group of experts would facilitate the study of such measures.

25. As the discontinuance of organized disarmament efforts within the United Nations had been an extremely negative feature of the past year's activities, his delegation felt that, in addition to any services the Secretary-General might be called upon to render, a clear link should be established between the United Nations and the forthcoming negotiations on the cessation of nuclear weapons tests, and that an agreement between

the three Powers directly involved should be followed without delay by appropriate United Nations action to make that agreement universal. An adequate link should also be established between the United Nations and the forthcoming conference of experts on safeguards against surprise attack.

26. Resumption of the work of a United Nations disarmament body with a balanced and generally acceptable composition was a matter of the utmost urgency. It appeared that there were no objections from any side to making that body the United Nations Disarmament Commission. It should be both a political body and one capable of effective work, and should be directly responsible to the General Assembly. It should be possible, through mutual good will, to find an acceptable answer to the question of the Commission's composition, the more so as it was obvious that no progress could be achieved through mere majority votes. Disarmament was essentially a matter for political decisions by Governments, and for that reason the decisive element in the successful functioning of the United Nations disarmament body would be the readiness of its members to reach agreement. No studies by experts or auxiliary bodies could be a substitute for that. Nevertheless, the establishment of adequate technical and expert groups to study the various aspects of disarmament had proved valuable during 1958 and their use within the framework of the United Nations could assist the work of the Commission.

27. The concept of initial and partial agreements as a method for the solution of the disarmament question had been generally accepted during the past few years. The essential elements for the achievement of such agreements should be brought out as clearly as possible in the course of the Committee's current discussion. His delegation felt that the draft resolution it had submitted at the twelfth session (A/C.1/L.180) met the needs of the present situation and could, with such minor additions as might be required by more recent developments, be taken into consideration by the United Nations disarmament body in its further work. However, in the present situation it would be most appropriate to leave the Commission free to pursue its work as it thought best, guided, of course, by the views and proposals submitted by Member States, both in the Committee and in the Assembly.

28. To sum up, his delegation believed that the following steps should now be taken in the matter of disarmament:

(1) The countries testing nuclear weapons should be requested to discontinue those tests pending agreement on the subject;

(2) Those countries should be requested to come to an early agreement on the cessation of tests and to report that action to the General Assembly so that the United Nations might take steps to make the agreement universal;

(3) All other countries should be called upon to refrain from nuclear weapons testing until such agreement was reached;

(4) An adequate link should be established between the United Nations and the forthcoming disarmament talks;

(5) The General Assembly should recommend that the United Nations disarmament body should devote its

efforts to the achievement of initial agreements, bearing in mind the statements and proposals made at the thirteenth session;

(6) The Secretary-General should be asked to keep Member States informed of the progress made in the matter of disarmament and to consult them on the desirability of convening a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

29. His delegation believed that unanimous decisions by the General Assembly on the questions now under consideration would greatly contribute to the progress all Members were striving to achieve.

30. Mr. ABDOLAH (Iran) said that the successful results of the Geneva Conference of Experts provided an opportunity for further progress in the matter of disarmament; technical studies of that nature promoted greater openness of information on armaments and thereby helped to dispel distrust among States and to ease world tension.

31. Although all the parties concerned sincerely desired to achieve disarmament, psychological and political obstacles, particularly the lack of mutual confidence, had stood in the way of agreement. Among technical problems, the establishment of a control system had met with difficulties; certain Powers had been reluctant to accept any curtailment of their absolute sovereignty, even though some relinquishment of sovereignty was necessary for the establishment of an effective system of controls. Prior to the Conference of Experts, the nations concerned had unsuccessfully tried to solve the problem of controls on a political basis. The new approach adopted at Geneva, whereby the technical aspects of the control problem had been studied by experts before the holding of political negotiations, indicated that those nations were taking a more flexible attitude and were gradually coming to accept the concept of a control system. It was gratifying that all the "nuclear Powers" had accepted the conclusion of the Conference of Experts that effective supervision of an agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests was technically feasible, and that they had stated their willingness to open negotiations with a view to the conclusion of such an agreement. His delegation also hoped that the forthcoming Geneva conference on technical measures to prevent surprise attack would clarify that problem and ultimately lead to an appropriate agreement.

32. Another possible reason for the previous lack of success in the field of disarmament was that too comprehensive an approach had been taken. Admittedly, any disarmament plan should cover all the aspects of the problem; if the various aspects were treated separately and with varying degrees of emphasis, the effect might be to give military advantages to certain countries. Nevertheless, the complexity of the disarmament problem was such that the various parts of a comprehensive plan should be examined separately; once tentative agreement had been reached on the individual issues, a more inclusive final agreement, designed to achieve a well-balanced system of disarmament, would be possible. In that connexion, the evolution in United States policy with regard to the suspension of nuclear weapons testing was gratifying.

33. Turning to the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) of which his delegation was a sponsor, he said that, while the ideal course would be to call for the immediate suspension of tests, the United States and the United Kingdom were understandably reluctant to accept a resolution which committed them definitely on the matter until agreement had been reached on the political and administrative aspects of control and until reasonable progress had been made on other aspects of the disarmament problem. Nevertheless, he wished that the United States and United Kingdom Governments would extend from one year to two years the period during which they had offered to suspend nuclear weapons tests if the Soviet Union Government agreed to do the same. He also hoped that the Soviet Union Government would one again suspend testing on 31 October 1958, when the Geneva conference was scheduled to open.

34. It was clearly the task of the United Nations under the Charter to consider the problem of disarmament, and the Organization should display constant interest in the course of negotiations even if some had to be conducted outside its framework. At the same time, an effort should be made to put the United Nations Disarmament Commission back on a functioning basis or, if necessary, to create a new body to ensure the continuity of work. He agreed with the Mexican representative's suggestion that the Committee should make recommendations on disarmament measures to the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union and that those four Powers should decide on the procedure to be followed (946th meeting). However, since any four-Power negotiations were unlikely to be conclusive until some progress had been made on the suspension of tests and also, perhaps, on the prevention of surprise attack, the Committee's initial task was to urge the four Powers, perhaps even more forcefully than was envisaged in the seventeen-Power draft resolution, to seek early agreement on those two matters. The General Assembly could be kept informed, through the Secretary-General, of the progress of the two forthcoming Geneva conferences; it could also invite the conference participants to avail themselves of the Secretary-General's assistance and services. If the Geneva negotiations proved successful, the General Assembly could work for the renewal of general disarmament negotiations among the parties primarily concerned and the extension to embrace all States of any agreement reached on the suspension of tests. Such organs as might be set up to supervise agreements on the suspension of tests and the prevention of surprise attack might also, while retaining their freedom of action, be integrated with the United Nations so as to take advantage of the latter's experience in the field of international co-operation.

35. It must be borne in mind that, in the matter of disarmament, progress could not be achieved through unilateral action; it was essential that the parties primarily concerned should come to an agreement. The Committee should therefore make every effort to adopt a unanimous resolution, and it might be helpful in that connexion if certain constructive elements in the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.202/Rev.1 and Add.1) were incorporated in the text of the seventeen-Power draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.