

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

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## CONTENTS

Agenda items 64, 70 and 72: Question of disarmament (continued)	Page
The discontinuance of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests (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 (continued)	
General debate (continued) . . . . .	79

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, A/C.1/L.206, A/C.1/L.208) (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 and Corr.1, 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. KISELEV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that in his statement on 10 October 1958 (945th meeting) the United States representative had made the cessation of nuclear weapons testing conditional on the solution of the entire disarmament problem. The statement had been designed to divert attention from the continuing arms race and to prevent careful examination by the First Committee of the various aspects of the disarmament question. Although the results of 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, had removed the last obstacles to the universal cessation of nuclear weapons testing, the United States and the United Kingdom were clearly unwilling to halt their tests.

2. In his statement of 14 October 1958 (948th meeting), the United Kingdom representative had attached conditions to the cessation of nuclear testing which were essentially the same as those laid down by the United States representative. In stating that the cessation of testing must be preceded by "satisfactory progress" towards the establishment of an effective international control system and towards the adoption and applica-

tion of measures of real disarmament, he had in effect claimed for the United States and the United Kingdom the right to decide when testing should be halted.

3. The one-year suspension of nuclear testing proposed by the United States and the United Kingdom would permit them to continue their nuclear arms programme, since, according to the United States Press, a period of twelve to twenty-four months was required to study the results of the current United States and United Kingdom tests and approximately a year was needed to prepare for a new series of tests. Furthermore, those two Powers' declaration of willingness to extend an agreement on the cessation of testing for further one-year periods was nullified by the various reservations which accompanied it. The seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) made it clear that the United States and the United Kingdom sought only a temporary suspension of testing at the forthcoming Geneva negotiations which were to begin on 31 October 1958, and were unwilling to accept an immediate, unconditional cessation of testing for all time.

4. In his statement of 20 October (955th meeting) declaring France's intention to produce and test atomic bombs, the French representative had spoken as an advocate of intensifying the nuclear arms race and increasing the number of "nuclear Powers".

5. The Byelorussian delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Ceylon on 16 October (950th meeting), calling for the immediate prohibition of nuclear test explosions and for the conclusion of an agreement on the elimination of atomic and hydrogen weapons and on disarmament in the field of conventional weapons, as well as the statement of 20 October (955th meeting) by the Ethiopian representative urging the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons for military purposes.

6. Whereas the Soviet memorandum on disarmament (A/3929) pointed the way to the solution of those questions, the United States, the United Kingdom and France had yet to make any concrete proposals on the prohibition of nuclear weapons or with regard to conventional weapons. The United States and United Kingdom representatives preferred to dwell on the advantages of a technical approach to the disarmament problem, obviously hoping thereby to prevent any real progress.

7. Commenting on an observation made by the Greek representative on 16 October (950th meeting), he said that the Soviet Union had refused to participate in the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission because, expanded though it had been to include twenty-five States, the Commission would continue to be dominated by the United States. He supported the Soviet proposal for the establishment of a permanent Disarmament Commission at least half of whose members would be representatives of socialist and neutral States (A/3929).

8. Referring to remarks made by the Peruvian representative on 14 October (948th meeting), he denied that the Soviet Union was attempting to separate the question of the prohibition of nuclear weapons testing from that of controls. In fact, the Soviet Government had been the first to approve the system of controls worked out by the Conference of Experts.

9. The Iranian representative, in his statement of 16 October (951st meeting) in support of the seventeen-Power draft resolution, had said that the technical problems of disarmament must be solved first and then the political. In the Byelorussian delegation's view, however, the essential problem in the matter of disarmament was to reach agreement on the basic political problems. The constant talk of the difficulties involved in setting up disarmament controls was intended to divert attention from the continued stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The cessation of nuclear testing would interfere with the plans of those who were engaged in preparing for nuclear war and creating new types of weapons.

10. A public opinion poll published in the English newspaper the News Chronicle on 11 June 1958 had revealed that substantial majorities of the inhabitants of major world cities, ranging from 62 per cent in London to 90 per cent in New Delhi, favoured the cessation of nuclear weapons testing. On 21 June 1958 the United States scientist Linus Pauling had stated that continuation of test explosions at the present rate would result in the birth of 75,000 children with serious defects during the present generation and in premature deliveries and stillbirths totalling ten times that number. The adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution calling for the immediate cessation of nuclear testing would therefore enhance the prestige of the United Nations throughout the world.

11. In addition to posing a threat to peace, the arms race was resulting in the squandering of vast resources. According to the United States Press, the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had spent more than \$420,000 million on armaments during the past eight years. On 17 April 1958, the President of the United States, Mr. Eisenhower, had stated that the military expenditures of that country during the past five years had totalled \$200,000 million, while in June 1958 the United States Secretary of Defense had declared that the production of expensive new types of weapons would cause the United States' military budget to rise to \$60,000 million to \$70,000 million in the near future. Both Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Macmillan, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, had pointed out the economic benefits which would ensue for their countries from a reduction in military budgets. Yet they continued to call for increased military spending on the ground that it was required to guard against possible Soviet aggression.

12. The United States was not only serving as an arsenal which provided arms to the members of its various military blocs; it was also compelling its allies to spend thousands of millions of dollars for military purposes to the detriment of their national interests. Furthermore, the United States was preparing to wage chemical and bacterial warfare. On 9 May 1958, the chief of the United States Army Chemical Corps had stated that his organization was trying to develop substances which would completely disrupt the

victims' nervous system and mental activity and, if possible, produce temporary blindness.

13. The chief opponents of a solution to the disarmament problem were the United States monopolists, who were loath to give up any part of their huge profits from arms production. According to the September 1958 issue of the United States periodical Economic Indicators, the monopolies' profits before taxes had climbed from \$6,400 million in 1939 to \$43,400 million in 1957.

14. The Byelorussian delegation supported the Soviet draft resolution calling for the reduction of the military budgets of the USSR, the United States, the United Kingdom and France (A/C.1/L.204), since such action, besides contributing to the relaxation of world tension, would make it possible to ease the burden on taxpayers and to expand assistance to the under-developed countries. Inasmuch as efforts to solve the disarmament problem as a whole had thus far proved unsuccessful, the step-by-step approach proposed by the Soviet Union was the correct one; the proposal for the reduction of military budgets was a concrete measure which could yield immediate practical results.

15. Mr. TSIANG (China) said that, although the ultimate goal was a comprehensive and balanced programme of disarmament, including both the nuclear and conventional fields, a start should be made towards partial solutions, though without losing sight of the fact that the various aspects of the disarmament problem were interdependent. The selection of the aspect deserving immediate attention should be guided by the existence of some measure of agreement among the major Powers concerned: only if such agreement existed could there be any hope that continued efforts would ultimately prove successful. Recent developments gave ground for guarded optimism with respect to future prospects.

16. The Chinese delegation regarded as a very important first step in disarmament the taking of practical measures to prevent surprise attack. It therefore welcomed the plan for a conference of experts of certain Powers on the subject to begin on 10 November 1958. Any measures likely to reduce the danger of surprise attack, properly implemented, would build up international confidence and thereby reduce the necessity for armaments. The General Assembly should wholeheartedly endorse the proposed conference and urge that the negotiations of the experts should be brought within the framework of the United Nations, as provided for in the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205).

17. Another step on which there was agreement among the "nuclear Powers" was the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests, subject to international inspection. Although the technical aspects of inspection had been agreed upon, there was no agreement on the duration and conditions of the discontinuance of tests. The Chinese delegation believed that a provisional discontinuance of tests should be agreed upon and carried out as a first step, and that a permanent cessation must depend on the establishment of effective control and on agreement on real disarmament measures. Unconditional and permanent cessation of tests at the present juncture would not be disarmament, would not relieve international tension and would not slow the arms race. Just as the United Nations could not have prevented the

emergence of a second and third "nuclear Power" after the United States' monopoly had been broken, since it could not enforce international control of atomic energy in the face of Soviet opposition, so the United Nations could not prevent the rise of other "nuclear Powers" so long as the production of fissionable materials and of existing types of nuclear weapons continued. Moreover, in the Chinese view, the world would not necessarily be worse off if there were additional "nuclear Powers". Whether or not there was any danger that West Germany might become a "nuclear Power", as a previous speaker had suggested, the Chinese delegation felt that the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons was more to be feared than any newcomer to the field.

18. The cessation of nuclear tests should be made conditional upon agreement with regard to the nuclear field of disarmament. In its resolution 1148 (XII), the General Assembly had already adopted a programme for that: fissionable materials were to be divided into two categories—existing stocks and future production. Since the latter could be controlled, agreement should first be reached on the prevention of future production for military purposes, and then on the gradual transfer of existing stocks to non-military uses under international supervision: both agreements might be carried out simultaneously. If the programme were enforced, States which did not possess nuclear weapons would not find it necessary to join in the competition for nuclear power. Any attempt to achieve a permanent cessation of nuclear tests without the implementation of the General Assembly resolution would fail.

19. Before it could be in a position to evaluate the Soviet proposal for the reduction of the military budgets of the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and France (A/C.1/L.204), the Chinese delegation would require more information about the budgetary systems of the Powers concerned, in particular, the Soviet Union, where all production and distribution was government-owned and managed and whose methods of price-fixing were unknown. It was impossible, with the few data available, to judge precisely what a reduction of 10 to 15 per cent in the military budget of the Soviet Union would mean. In the circumstances, the United Nations should establish a body of experts to make a comparative study of the budgetary systems of the four countries concerned, particularly the systems used in framing their military budgets. Pending a report by that body, the Soviet draft resolution should remain on the agenda.

20. Mr. PICCIONI (Italy) said that the whole disarmament problem, because of its complexity and the new elements continually introduced into it owing to the rapid rate of progress in the technique of armaments, had continuously to be reviewed and the interests and methods involved re-evaluated. He could not therefore endorse the superficial criticisms of the long debate on disarmament which had taken place in the United Nations. Nor should the efforts made to clarify the problem and to find ways and means of solving it be underestimated.

21. It was true, nevertheless, that for a year no progress had been made on the question in the United Nations: that was the more regrettable as the General Assembly, in 1957, had succeeded in establishing a reasonable and specific basis for negotiation and had, by enlarging the Disarmament Commission (resolution 1150 (XII)), created a more appropriate and represen-

tative body in which such negotiations might take place. The lack of practical results must be attributed to the Soviet Union's refusal to take part in the work of the Disarmament Commission or to comply with General Assembly resolution 1148 (XII).

22. Fortunately, however, some progress had been made during the past year outside the framework of the United Nations. The results of the Conference of Experts recently held at Geneva had been encouraging. Even more encouraging were the assurances since given concerning a suspension of nuclear weapons tests, the announcement of the forthcoming negotiations on the subject at Geneva and the decision to hold a meeting of experts to discuss the technical aspects of inspection against surprise attack. Thus, deeply as the interruption in the work of the Disarmament Commission was to be regretted, it must be recognized that some progress had been made, although it would not be possible fully to appraise that progress until the conclusion of an agreement on the control of nuclear tests and the completion of the work of the conference on surprise attack.

23. Turning to the draft resolutions before the Committee, he pointed out that the proposals in the two Soviet drafts (A/C.1/L.203 and Corr.1, A/C.1/L.204) were already contained in General Assembly resolution 1148 (XII). The great difference between the Assembly's resolution and the Soviet drafts was that in the latter the proposals concerning the cessation of nuclear tests and the reduction of military budgets were detached from the general framework to which they belonged and were presented as independent objectives. Apart from the fact that those proposals lost much of their effectiveness in isolation, his delegation considered that, far from bringing the goal of disarmament closer, their adoption might constitute a dangerous step backward, for they made no mention of an undertaking to destroy stockpiles of nuclear weapons or of the establishment of a system of control. Moreover, the emphasis placed during the debate on the unconditional character which the cessation of nuclear tests should have, clearly indicated an intention to separate the suspension of tests of nuclear weapons from the abolition of such weapons and to separate the special problem of nuclear arms from the general problem of disarmament.

24. His delegation was the first to acknowledge the need for a step-by-step approach in the matter of disarmament, but only if that approach did not involve the separation of goals which were essentially inseparable. The elimination of nuclear tests for military purposes was a goal to which Italy attached great importance, but it would not by itself solve the problem of the security of States against aggression. The final solution of the problem of nuclear tests must be envisaged as part of a co-ordinated and rational process of general disarmament. Unless conventional armaments and armed forces were reduced at the same time, there would be no increase in the security of States, more particularly small States, which could be attacked without the need for resort to nuclear weapons. Arms races and wars had occurred before nuclear weapons existed and the problem of disarmament would remain essentially unchanged if agreement were reached only on a qualitative limitation of armaments. Moreover, if it was impossible to achieve an agreement on the reduction of conventional armaments at a time when,

for most people, thermo-nuclear weapons represented the real threat to peace, it was difficult to believe that agreement would be easier to achieve when, through the limitation or prohibition of atomic weapons, conventional armaments had recovered their former importance. And without such an agreement on conventional armaments, peace would be threatened by the lack of balance in the possession by some States of a preponderance of conventional armaments.

25. Another point contained in Assembly resolution 1148 (XII) and omitted from the Soviet draft resolutions concerned the reduction of armaments through safeguarded arrangements. To speak of disarmament without control was merely to indulge in demagoguery, for no State could renounce its duty of safeguarding its own vital security interests. Moreover, failure to carry out international agreements had been too frequent in the past to permit confidence regarding the fulfilment of agreements affecting those very interests. Although the Soviet Union had acknowledged the importance of control in principle, it had in practice always evaded detailed plans or commitments, while the attacks made on the advocates of control at recent meetings of the Committee could not but raise new apprehensions. By simply requesting the abolition of nuclear tests for military purposes and making no mention of control, the General Assembly would be hindering rather than helping the coming negotiations at Geneva and favouring those who were traditionally opposed to control.

26. Italy had not remained rigidly attached to the position it had adopted at the twelfth session. It realized the dangers of nuclear tests for military purposes and fervently desired their immediate suspension. But, like the other sponsors of the seventeen-Power draft resolution, it was requesting that suspension on the only basis which could provide certainty that it would be respected and would endure: an agreement on suspension could only be lasting if the armaments race which was the cause of nuclear tests was halted.

27. It had been emphasized that the progress made during 1958 had been due solely to the separation of technical from political questions. Accordingly, his delegation interpreted operative paragraph 4 of the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) as containing an invitation to convene further meetings of experts to resolve some of the principal technical problems of disarmament, particularly that of the organization and functioning of an effective system of international control.

28. His Government attached great importance to the study of technical measures for the prevention of surprise attack, and would assist that study in any way possible. It also attached special importance to the permanent prohibition of the use of cosmic space for military purposes, and considered that a committee should be established as a matter of urgency to study a possible international agreement on that question.

29. His delegation believed that the United Nations should proceed step by step, always keeping in mind the final goal of comprehensive, balanced and controlled disarmament, which would increase the margin of security of all States, and particularly of small States. The seventeen-Power draft resolution would be a step towards that goal.

30. Mr. ORTIZ MARTIN (Costa Rica) said that his country could speak with moral authority on the ques-

tion of disarmament, for it had always abjured the use of arms and under its new Constitution it no longer even maintained an army. It supported the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) because it shared the values of European civilization and because it believed that great caution must be exercised in order to achieve effective disarmament by all concerned. The leaders of the West had a triple responsibility, for they must preserve not only their own security and that of the Western hemisphere, but civilization itself.

31. If nuclear tests were conducted solely in the interests of science and humanity, they could not be objected to, despite the risks involved. But they were being used for purposes of destruction and must therefore be stopped.

32. His delegation had joined in sponsoring an amendment to the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.209) which reproduced a provision to the same effect adopted by the First Committee during the twelfth session of the General Assembly (A/C.1/L.181/Rev.1). Its purpose in doing so was to assure the growth and development of the under-developed countries.

33. Costa Rica desired the cessation of nuclear weapons tests and the achievement of an agreement for disarmament under proper controls, which would put an end to the fear and despair which were sapping the spiritual strength of mankind.

34. Mr. EBAN (Israel) said that the year which had passed since the twelfth session of the General Assembly had been marked by the failure of international statesmanship to meet the challenge of scientific and technical progress and to bring the new forces in nature under control. It was a year during which there had been no negotiations between the great Powers on the reduction and limitation of armaments, on cessation of the manufacture and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, or on a system of control without which no disarmament agreement could be effective. In contrast, the past year had also witnessed continuing production of nuclear explosives, testing of thermo-nuclear devices and additional concentrations of radio-active substances in the earth's atmosphere.

35. No problem affected small nations more than disarmament. Their least duty was to help bring the weight of world opinion to bear on the policies of the major Powers. Owing to failure to agree on the composition of the Disarmament Commission, the logical programme set forth in General Assembly resolution 1148 (XII) had not even been put to the test of negotiation. And because there had been no direct discussion between the great Powers since August 1957 on the reduction, limitation and regulation of armaments, the Committee's debate had been confined to two questions: the possibility of increasing the prospect of an agreed suspension of nuclear weapons tests, and the maintenance or establishment of machinery through which more substantive disarmament negotiations could be continued within the United Nations.

36. The general disarmament deadlock had not prevented some progress towards an agreed and controlled suspension of nuclear weapons tests by the three "nuclear Powers". An agreement on the suspension of tests had come within the range of possibility following the Conference of Experts on the technical means of detecting violations of such an agreement. The urgency

of the conclusion of such an agreement had been underscored by the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation which had included among the steps designed to minimize irradiation the cessation of contamination of the environment by test explosions of nuclear weapons (A/3838, Chap. VII, para. 54). Scientific opinion was now divided only on the extent of the hazard to human health and life presented by test explosions. In the circumstances, it was natural to be guided by the more cautious alternative; an unduly complacent approach, if proved wrong, might be beyond repair. It was notable that all three "nuclear Powers" had also unequivocally accepted the report of the Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests (A/3897) and the control system it contained.

37. In the circumstances, the Committee should strive to present the General Assembly with a unanimous formula designed to promote agreement between the three Powers at the Geneva conference to begin on 31 October 1958. Like the Swedish delegation, the Israel delegation believed that such unanimity was possible and necessary. While it was true that agreement in principle on a controlled suspension of tests had been achieved, there were still a number of differences regarding the duration of, and the procedures for, such suspension and the General Assembly should not help to make those differences more rigid. The Assembly's action should be directed towards promoting three-Power agreement, and any text it adopted should be supported by the three negotiating Powers themselves. It was therefore to be hoped that the delegations sponsoring the various draft resolutions on the discontinuance of tests would strive to consolidate their efforts into a text acceptable to the three "nuclear Powers".

38. There was no profit in considering that the alternatives were total cessation of tests or uncontrolled continuation of them. The advocates of a "suspension" for a limited period were not implying a desire to resume tests after that period. They looked towards a suspension which would be renewable, accompanied by a continuing scrutiny of the control system and by general progress in disarmament. Indeed, the United States had spoken of its determination to reach "an equitable and lasting agreement". If an agreed suspension could be controlled for a definite period, the confidence thus generated and the pressure of public opinion might well rule out a return to the period of uncontrolled testing. Recent international experience showed that provisional agreements were capable of perpetuating themselves by their own manifest efficacy. The real difference between "suspension" and "cessation" was therefore much smaller than it had been made to appear, and it might be helpful if any resolution dealing with a "suspension" of tests were supplemented by language indicating that the "suspension" was envisaged as a stage leading to an "equitable and lasting agreement".

39. It had been rightly said that a discontinuance of tests was not in itself a measure of disarmament. If agreement on nuclear tests were reached at all, it would be because a control system had been worked out and accepted. The inhibition about control had been the focal point of the whole disarmament deadlock. If a control system could be applied to nuclear weapons

tests and the fears of deception or espionage or violated sovereignty dispelled, the prospect of a general disarmament system based on control might be enhanced. But the General Assembly had to do more than recommend the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests. It had to cope with the much greater danger presented by the production, accumulation and potential use of nuclear weapons, for it must not lose sight of the fact that one bomb dropped on a populated area in war would inflict more destruction than all the tests even undertaken in time of peace.

40. It should be noted that none of the draft resolutions on the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests required any Government to destroy a single nuclear bomb now in its arsenal, to abstain from continued production of nuclear weapons or to transfer any fissionable materials from military to non-military use. Nor were there any proposals before the Committee for the limitation of conventional armaments, which were also increasing in destructive power. Without disputing the primary importance of the question of nuclear weapons, Israel urged more consideration for the vulnerability of small nations resulting from the increased explosive force of conventional weapons.

41. Apart from the issues he had enumerated, there was the question of preventing the further dissemination of nuclear weapons which had been raised in the Irish draft amendments (A/C.1/L.207). Ireland had raised a very real problem, especially in view of the possibility that surplus nuclear weapons might be distributed to countries which did not possess or manufacture them. In that field, as in any other, the value of any ban was determined by the efficacy of the control system established to implement it.

42. Unfortunately, there was little likelihood of a substantive discussion on all those broader disarmament questions during the current session. The Committee's best hope was that a three-Power agreement at Geneva might lead to the acceptance of control procedures which would be relevant to the other aspects of disarmament. But the United Nations could not disengage itself totally from the whole field of disarmament negotiations in the interval before the fourteenth session of the General Assembly. Israel, like many other Member States, felt that such negotiations should be resumed and that any reasonable procedural framework would be acceptable, provided that it was really used by the four Powers most directly concerned. Israel supported the view expressed by the Mexican representative (946th meeting) that the question of disarmament could not be left subject to sporadic yearly meetings of the Assembly or to occasional talks on specific items such as those held and to be held at Geneva. It was to be hoped that the four great Powers would find a means of advancing United Nations disarmament discussion in the coming months. Otherwise, whatever success was achieved at Geneva would leave the basic issues of the nuclear and conventional arms race untouched. The Committee should urgently heed the plea of the representative of France for a framework within which negotiations on basic substantive issues would proceed (955th meeting). If such negotiations could be reactivated, there might be some prospect of progress away from the existing disarmament deadlock.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.