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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, A/C.1/L.206, A/C.1/L.208, A/C.1/L.210, A/C.1/L.211) (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. FEKINI (Libya) said that, at the present stage, mankind's only remaining hope was that the United Nations would be able to save the present and succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to put into practice the principles essential for the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations must therefore continue to toil tirelessly for a solution to the problem of disarmament despite the little success achieved so far. He congratulated the Secretary-General on his excellent memorandum on the question of disarmament (A/3936). What should encourage the United Nations to persevere was the determination of the small nations that the Organization should devote its main efforts to the problem of disarmament and the unanimous desire of all the peoples of the world to live in peace and avoid the agony of war.

2. Comparing the various draft resolutions before the Committee, he noted that the points of similarity far outweighed those of difference. Although the points of difference were not unimportant, efforts should be made to arrive at a single draft resolution which could be adopted unanimously. His delegation would

therefore be glad to support the Haitian representative's proposal that the Committee should set up a restricted committee composed of the sponsors of the various draft resolutions with the task of submitting to the Committee a single draft resolution which could command the unanimous support of its members (961th meeting). It should be noted in that connexion that the amendments and additions recently proposed to the original texts, in some cases by the sponsors themselves, showed a definite desire for compromise, which should encourage the Committee to try that solution. If the attempt at reconciliation failed, however, his delegation would take a decision on the various draft resolutions according to their merits.

3. His delegation felt that the proposal made by the Ethiopian representative at the 955th meeting concerning the adoption by the General Assembly of a United Nations declaration on disarmament deserved serious attention. A declaration of that kind would help to stimulate the efforts of all the peoples of the world and to strengthen the current of opinion which the threat of war created by the arms race had produced.

4. He wished to express the concern felt by the people of Libya and the other African countries at the news that France intended to carry out nuclear weapons tests in the Sahara. He accordingly associated himself with the other delegations which had already made protests in the matter.

5. His delegation had studied very carefully the draft resolution submitted by Mexico (A/C.1/L.208). It was ready to give the draft its full support and hoped that the informal conversations referred to would yield satisfactory results. He accordingly hoped that the resumption in the near future of disarmament negotiations within the United Nations and the forthcoming conferences at Geneva would result in the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction and would usher in an age of peace, security, co-operation and prosperity for the peoples of the earth.

6. Mr. HICKENLOOPER (United States of America), after explaining that his delegation would reply later to the statement made by the representative of the USSR at the previous meeting, presented some observations on the question of disarmament.

7. The people, Congress and Government of the United States attached the greatest importance to the disarmament question and sought, by means of balanced and controlled disarmament, to promote justice and peace in the world. The people of the United States sincerely hoped that the present deadlock on disarmament would be broken and international tension reduced.

8. Despite the difficulties of the task, it should be possible by agreements concluded in good faith to arrive at a balanced world-wide limitation of armaments with effective controls.

9. The halting of nuclear weapons tests was widely regarded as the first step towards real disarmament. However, while the halting of nuclear weapons tests might limit the variety of weapons and might improve the political or psychological climate, it must be realized that such a measure would not automatically lead to the cessation of the manufacture of those weapons or to a reduction of existing stockpiles. On that point he shared the views expressed by the representative of Peru at the 948th meeting and by the Cuban representative at the 956th meeting.

10. The United States would like to see the world situation develop in such a way that it would never again be necessary to conduct nuclear test explosions, but, as everyone knew, the Soviet bloc maintained substantially larger conventional forces than the countries of the West, whose inferiority in that respect was only offset by superiority in nuclear power. If the United States was to renounce without danger its ability to maintain the balance by an adequate nuclear defensive strength, it must be assured of a corresponding reduction of other means of waging war, which would otherwise give other nations definite superiority.

11. He recalled that, at the end of the meetings of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in London in 1957, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Canada had put forward specific recommendations on partial disarmament which included the convening of groups of experts to study the feasibility of establishing the inspection systems necessary for the control of any agreements which might be reached (DC/113, annex 5). The positive results of that initiative were well known. The Geneva 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 been successful and a technical conference on the question of preventing surprise attack was to begin on 10 November 1958.

12. The United States had now decided to suspend nuclear weapons tests unilaterally for one year with effect from the commencement of the Geneva conference on the discontinuance of nuclear tests, on 31 October 1958, provided the USSR refrained from testing during that period. It was prepared to extend that suspension indefinitely. It asked only that, each year, the parties to the agreement should be satisfied that the inspection system was working effectively and that reasonable progress was being made on real disarmament.

13. Admittedly, the USSR had stated that it subscribed to the principle of control, but its position as set forth in the draft resolution it had submitted (A/C.1/L.203 and Corr.1) left room for doubt as to how vital it believed a control system to be. One was compelled to wonder why the Soviet draft resolution failed to mention either the forthcoming Geneva negotiations or the principles of control. He hoped that that was only an oversight.

14. As had been amply shown by the disarmament discussions, a basis of mutual confidence had to be established if there was to be any progress on disarmament. That confidence must be based on facts, and not on words. Controls were therefore necessary so as to assure each State that the other parties to the

agreement were continuing to implement it in good faith. An agreement without adequate controls would be worse than no agreement at all. Tests not exceeding five kilotons in force could be carried out with a minimum chance of detection. Moreover, there was the problem, not only of detecting explosions, but also of identifying their types. For example, earthquakes could be taken for underground nuclear explosions. In such cases free access to the site of the explosion was essential for purposes of inspection.

15. As his delegation had already told the Committee, the United States Government accepted the system of control recommended by the Conference of Experts which met at Geneva. Such a system of control was necessary for two reasons: to give each party the assurance that the agreement was in fact being carried out; and to deter any country from violating the agreement.

16. The United States was not only ready to conclude an agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests on the terms proposed, but it was also prepared to explore any path which could lead to disarmament, since its fundamental aim was world peace.

17. The Second World War had ended with the United States in sole possession of atomic weapons and the means to produce them. His country had then also had the most powerful military force the world had ever seen. The United States was fully aware of that power and, had its policies been aggressive, it could no doubt have imposed its will by force upon any country. But it had no aggressive intentions towards any nation. The United States was dedicated only to peace, freedom and human dignity.

18. In order to eliminate the danger of an atomic war that might well destroy civilization, the Government of the United States had made a proposal unique in the history of the world: the Baruch Plan.<sup>1/</sup> Under that proposal the manufacture of atomic weapons would have ceased, all existing atomic weapons, then held exclusively by the United States, would have been destroyed as weapons, and the useful nuclear material transferred to an international agency and used for peaceful purposes.

19. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly had formally approved (resolution 191 (III)) the essential elements of the United States proposal, but the Soviet Union had cavalierly rejected that proposal and had intensified its drive for the production of atomic instruments of war.

20. There was probably no other instance in history when a nation had offered to give up a weapon in its exclusive possession which could have enabled it to dominate the world.

21. In spite of the fact that the task of waging peace had become much more difficult, the United States and the other peace-loving nations must redouble their efforts to accomplish their aim.

22. Mr. BRUCAN (Romania) found it difficult to understand how those who favoured a temporary suspension of nuclear weapons tests believed that such a step would be more conducive to genuine progress in the solution of the general problem of disarmament than a

<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the Atomic Energy Commission, First Year, No. 1, 1st meeting, pp. 10-13.

final cessation of tests. The French representative had even argued, at the 955th meeting, that a temporary suspension of nuclear test explosions would be too big a step and might prejudice the adoption of a general programme of disarmament. Yet it was obvious that the qualitative advances, including the development of new systems or new devices, were more important than the quantitative advances achieved by the "nuclear Powers".

23. A suspension of tests implied the possibility that the tests might be resumed at the end of the period set. Since no Power would permit another Power to gain advantage to the detriment of its own security, the period of suspension would probably be used for the perfecting of nuclear devices and preparations for further tests. New discoveries would surely be made, and it could thus be foreseen that the decision to halt the tests would not be renewed. On the other hand, a cessation of tests would necessarily put an end to the continuous perfecting of nuclear weapons and would facilitate the adoption of other disarmament measures.

24. It had to be remembered that the Powers which were on the point of acquiring possession of nuclear weapons had everything to gain by the acceptance of a temporary suspension of test explosions, which would enable them to perfect their own weapons. The statement of the French representative should be borne in mind in that connexion. Only a universal cessation of tests would meet the wishes of mankind, to which the General Assembly was responsible.

25. Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan) reviewed the positions taken on the question of nuclear weapons tests by the various speakers who had preceded him, and recalled the draft resolution submitted by his own delegation at the twelfth session (A/C.1/L.174). He also noted the outstanding developments in the situation during the past year: the Soviet decision to suspend testing, the success of the Conference of Experts, the United States and United Kingdom declarations concerning the suspension of testing, and the undertaking given by the "nuclear Powers" to initiate negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement on the suspension of tests and the establishment of an international control system.

26. The evolution in the positions of the United States and the United Kingdom was particularly gratifying. It was important to note in that connexion that the change in the attitude of the United States had been decided on, as the representative of that country had said (945th meeting), after a consideration of minority views as expressed in the United Nations. On the other hand, it was regrettable that the Soviet Union had reversed its decision of 31 March 1958 to halt its nuclear test explosions.

27. The people, the Diet and the Government of Japan desired not only a cessation of the tests, but also a prohibition of the manufacture, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons. The Japanese delegation felt, however, that flexibility and realism were needed in the efforts to find a solution.

28. Humanitarian considerations should be given the utmost importance in the deliberations on the issue under discussion. The report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/3838) was not calculated to lessen the apprehension and anxiety to which the test explosions gave

rise. Because of its own experience in the matter, Japan had a part to play in sparing the world the sufferings it had endured. If it was not possible to humanize war, an endeavour might at least be made to humanize peace.

29. The suspension of nuclear weapons tests would have a favourable effect on the discussion of other disarmament problems and would widen the scope of a possible relaxation of tension. On the eve of the Geneva talks, two possible approaches were open to the Committee. First, it could decide in favour of immediate and temporary measures capable of creating a climate conducive to the success of the negotiations. The Committee would take note of the declarations of intention made by the United States and the United Kingdom. In that connexion, the Japanese delegation regretted that the Soviet Union had seen fit to adopt the attitude defined by Mr. Zorin at the 964th meeting. For its own part, it had warmly welcomed the proposal to suspend tests, although it considered that one year was not long enough.

30. Secondly, the Committee could recommend a permanent solution. The United States proposed that the period of suspension should be renewed on a year-to-year basis, subject to a determination at the beginning of each year that the inspection system was installed and working effectively, and that satisfactory progress was being made towards general disarmament. The latter condition presupposed that there would be negotiations, which could take place within the framework of the talks which were to begin at Geneva on 31 October. The General Assembly should urge the parties to the negotiations to make every effort to reach an agreement on a formula which would permit the discontinuance of tests to be established on a lasting basis. As negotiations of that nature would not be easy, the assistance of the Secretary-General could be extremely useful.

31. The Japanese delegation found two reasons for being hopeful concerning the outcome of the Geneva talks: for one thing, the very fact of negotiations was encouraging, and for another, the present flexibility of the United States and the United Kingdom was most auspicious. Moreover, in 1957, the Soviet Union had expressed itself in favour of a suspension of tests for a period of two or three years. There was accordingly reason to hope that a compromise formula would emerge and to believe that a solution leading to a permanent cessation was not out of the question.

32. In view of the magnitude of the problem, it was necessary that all parties concerned should be willing to accept a settlement and its implementation. Experience had shown that unity of views on essentials among the principal parties concerned was also indispensable. The Japanese delegation would do everything in its power to facilitate that unity, without which the prospects of the Geneva conference would not be very bright. It was the duty of the General Assembly to do everything possible to prevent that conference from failing. All useless rhetoric and unworkable proposals should therefore be avoided.

33. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) said that, with the approach of the conference scheduled to open at Geneva on 31 October, there was a general feeling of doubt and pessimism in the Committee because the United States and the United Kingdom on the one hand, and the

Soviet Union on the other, had defined their respective attitudes rather rigidly. That was a source of great concern to the small nations.

34. In essence, two proposals were before the Committee: the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) and the thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.202/Rev.1 and Add.1). If it was desired that the General Assembly should fulfil its moral obligation to create a favourable atmosphere for the Geneva talks, it was essential to find a formula for reconciling the two texts.

35. The Soviet delegation could, without dishonour and without abandoning its ideal of an unconditional cessation of tests, make a start by agreeing to take an intermediate position. From the humanitarian point of view, a suspension was necessary. An interruption, even for one year, would represent a step forward that the whole world would welcome. On the other hand, public opinion was unlikely to take a favourable view of an unyielding attitude.

36. It was not enough to express hopes for the success of the forthcoming conference if the negotiations were to begin while nuclear test explosions continued. Before elaborating all the control procedures, it was essential that the parties concerned should decide by common agreement on a one-year suspension that could be prolonged indefinitely.

37. The Geneva conference must not be made to take place in an unfavourable political atmosphere, which would substantially reduce its chances of success. Failure of the conference would greatly increase mistrust and, consequently, the difficulties of future negotiation. The situation would then be extremely serious.

38. He appealed urgently to the great Powers and to all the other Members of the United Nations to endeavour individually to arrive at an agreement, in order that the Geneva conference might open in a favourable atmosphere.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.