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Chairman: Mr. Franz MATSCH (Austria).

AGENDA ITEM 70

General and complete disarmament (A/4218, A/4219, A/C.1/818)

GENERAL DEBATE

1. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed his delegation's gratification that the First Committee had unanimously decided to give the question of general and complete disarmament first place on its agenda. It was only reasonable that the Committee should concentrate with unimpaired energies on such a pressing and complex problem.

2. Recalling the statement made by Mr. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in the General Assembly (799th plenary meeting), when introducing the new Soviet proposals on disarmament, he pointed out that the Soviet Union had been a constant champion of a disarmament agreement and had pursued a consistent policy in favour of peaceful coexistence between nations.

3. In the belief that any effective solution to the problem of disarmament must be a radical one, the Soviet Union had, as far back as 1922 at the Genoa Conference, proposed that the question of complete disarmament of all States should be the first item of discussion. If the Soviet proposals had been heeded, the tragedy of the Second World War might have been averted. It was the duty of all Governments to prevent a repetition of that mistake, which might result in a war with immeasurably graver consequences than the last.

4. Since the establishment of the United Nations, the Soviet Union, guided by the peaceful principles of its foreign policy and the provisions of the Charter, had continually put forward constructive proposals on disarmament. It had proposed that atomic weapons should be prohibited, that armed forces and military expenditure should be reduced and that military bases on foreign territory should be dismantled—all those measures to be implemented under effective international control.

5. Acting in that spirit, the Soviet Union had begun with a large-scale demobilization after the war, and in recent years had unilaterally reduced its armed forces and dismantled its military bases abroad. Every year, the Soviet State reduced its military expenditure and

channelled the funds thus released into the development of industry, agriculture and social services.

6. In 1958, the Soviet Union had decided unilaterally to cease nuclear weapons tests in the USSR. Recently, it had decided not to resume tests if the Western Powers did not resume them. A similar decision by other Powers would constitute an important step towards halting the armaments race in nuclear weapons and would favour the solution of other long outstanding disarmament questions.

7. The existence of numerous military bases on foreign territory, with atomic weapons and rocket-launching sites, considerably increased the danger of nuclear warfare and aggravated tension between States to the point where even a local conflict might result in a general conflagration. In the present circumstances a war could break out between States separated by vast distances and could involve entire continents. It could even ensue merely from an error of technical operation or of human judgement.

8. Apart from endangering general peace and security, the armaments race caused untold damage by diverting to military purposes resources and skills that could be used to promote scientific exchange and progress in all spheres of human activity.

9. Such a situation could not continue any longer. After careful analysis the Soviet Government had reached the conclusion that the danger of a new war could only be radically removed by general and complete disarmament. Peace among nations could only be secured by removing, within the shortest possible time limit, all the material means at the disposal of States for waging war.

10. The Soviet programme envisaged the abolition of all armed forces by all States—apart from the minimum contingents necessary for maintaining internal security. In addition, general staffs should be dissolved, and war ministries and military training establishments closed. Military bases should be removed from foreign territories; all atomic and hydrogen bombs should be destroyed and their further production discontinued; energy from fissionable materials should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes; military missiles should be eliminated and rockets should be used for transportation and the exploration of outer space for the benefit of mankind. Furthermore, all military materials, warships and aircraft should be scrapped and, finally, all stockpiles of chemical and bacterial means of warfare should be destroyed.

11. The Soviet Union proposed that the programme should be carried out by stages within a period of four years, and should be begun without delay.

12. The measures to be carried out in the first stage of disarmament were:

(a) The reduction, under appropriate control, of the armed forces of the USSR, the United States and the

People's Republic of China to the level of 1.7 million men each, and of those of the United Kingdom and France to the level of 650,000 men each;

(b) The reduction of the armed forces of other States to levels to be agreed upon at a special session of the General Assembly or at a world conference on general and complete disarmament;

(c) The reduction of armaments and military equipment to levels corresponding to those fixed for the armed forces.

13. The measures to be carried out in the second stage were:

(a) The completion of the disbandment of armed forces;

(b) The elimination of all military bases in the territories of foreign States and the withdrawal of troops and military personnel from the territories of foreign States to within their own national frontiers.

14. The measures to be carried out in the third stage were:

(a) The destruction of all types of nuclear weapons and missiles;

(b) The destruction of air-force equipment;

(c) The prohibition of the production, possession and storage of means of chemical and bacterial warfare and the destruction, under international supervision, of all stockpiles of chemical and bacterial weapons;

(d) The prohibition of scientific research for military purposes and of the development of weapons and military equipment;

(e) The abolition of war ministries, general staffs and all military and para-military establishments and organizations;

(f) The termination of military courses and training and the prohibition by law of the military education of young people;

(g) The enactment of legislation by the States abolishing military service in all forms and prohibiting the re-establishment of military or para-military establishments and organizations;

(h) The discontinuance of the appropriation of funds for military purposes in any form, which would permit the reduction or abolition of taxation; the funds thus made available should be used to subsidize national economies and to furnish extensive economic and technical assistance to under-developed countries.

15. He wished to stress that, contrary to the assertions made in some quarters, the Soviet disarmament programme provided for a strict and comprehensive system of control. However, control was not an end in itself; it was inseparable from disarmament. It constituted a means of verifying the implementation of concrete measures of disarmament. Unless genuine disarmament was undertaken, control measures would in effect be transformed into military intelligence activities and thus undermine the security of States. In the past, when attempts had been made to achieve a partial solution of the disarmament problem, certain States had used the issue of control in order to block agreement. However, once complete disarmament was carried out and military bases were removed from the territories of foreign States, States would no longer

fear attack and would throw open their territory for broad, unimpeded international control.

16. For the purpose of supervising the timely implementation of general and complete disarmament, an international control organ composed of all States should be set up and provided with all necessary facilities. Its staff should be recruited on an international basis with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The extent of the control exercised and the functions and powers of the international control organ should correspond to the particular stage reached in the process of disarmament. After general and complete disarmament had been achieved, the controllers would remain in the various countries to ensure compliance with the disarmament agreement. The control organization could institute a system of aerial observation and photography for that purpose.

17. At the present stage of consideration of the disarmament problem, it was inadvisable to take up all the details of control. Once agreement was reached in principle on general and complete disarmament, it would not be difficult to work out a more detailed scheme of international control and inspection. As the implementation of disarmament measures progressed, confidence between States would increase and the functions and powers of the international control organ could be gradually expanded.

18. If a State sought to evade its obligations under a treaty on general and complete disarmament, the matter should be submitted for immediate consideration by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations.

19. The implementation of the programme of general and complete disarmament could not and should not be made dependent upon the solution of outstanding international problems, for disarmament was the main link in the chain of problems which divided nations. By removing it, the whole chain would gradually become unravelled, for the conditions necessary for the peaceful solution of the other problems through negotiation would have been created. Agreement on disarmament would mark a turning-point in international relations. It would inaugurate an era of co-operation among States on a new basis—the basis of peaceful competition in creating better living conditions for all people. With the destruction of all means of warfare, relations between States with different social systems would necessarily take the form of peaceful coexistence. In the atmosphere of mutual trust which would then prevail, any differences and disputes which might arise would be resolved at the conference table or by other peaceful means prescribed by the United Nations Charter.

20. The peoples of the world would derive great economic benefits from general and complete disarmament. The magnitude of the resources which would be released by general and complete disarmament and diverted to productive enterprises could be seen from the fact that, in the ten years of its existence, NATO had spent three times more for military purposes than the combined annual revenue of its European members. Obviously, in the circumstances, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries were forced to spend considerable sums to maintain their defence. If Governments were relieved of that heavy burden of armaments, material and spiritual development in all

countries could proceed at a much faster rate. Every family whose income was reduced by taxes used to pay for armaments production would immediately feel the benefits of disarmament. The army of scientists and experts at present engaged in military work would be free to apply their knowledge and experience to the development of peaceful branches of science, and the free exchange of scientific information would make it possible for all countries to pool their efforts in the solution of many important difficulties confronting mankind.

21. The charge of some economists and politicians in the West that a cessation of arms production would cause economic difficulties and wide-spread unemployment of people engaged in military industry was unfounded. It was made by those who sought to justify the continuation of the arms race, with the enormous profits it earned for the manufacturers of weapons. In reality, the arms race, by reducing individual incomes and causing financial disorder and inflation, narrowed domestic and foreign markets and thereby deprived millions of people in the long run of their means of subsistence. The elimination of military expenditures would increase the purchasing power of the population and the capacity of markets. With the release of tremendous industrial capacities and financial resources, and in a climate of restored confidence between nations, there would be unlimited prospects for international economic co-operation and trade without discrimination. In that connexion, it might be recalled that some responsible spokesmen for United States business circles were of the opinion that disarmament would not adversely affect the American economy.

22. General and complete disarmament would also have important positive effects on assistance to under-developed countries. If even a small part of the funds released as a result of the elimination of military expenditures by the great Powers were allocated for as-

sistance to those countries, a new era in the development of Asia, Africa and Latin America could be inaugurated. At the same time, industry in the highly developed countries would be operating at full capacity to fill the orders it would receive. With complete disarmament, it would be possible to provide the under-developed countries not only with funds, but with experts, machinery, materials, and the like, and thus eliminate their backwardness and secure decent living conditions for millions of people.

23. In submitting its proposal for general and complete disarmament (A/4219), the Soviet Union was prompted solely by the desire to prevent another war and to secure a lasting peace. As stated in the communiqué issued on 27 September 1959, following the visit of Mr. Khrushchev to the United States, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the President of the United States agreed that the question of general disarmament was the most important one facing the world. Both Governments, the communiqué declared, would make every effort to achieve a constructive solution of that problem. As a result of that statement, the prospects for reaching agreement were favourable. It was also gratifying to note that the overwhelming majority of the delegations to the United Nations declared that general and complete disarmament was essential.

24. The Soviet Government called upon the Governments of all countries, and particularly the Governments of the Powers with the largest armed forces, which bore primary responsibility for international security, to proceed jointly and without delay to the elaboration of an agreement on general and complete disarmament. The Soviet delegation urged all Member States to support the USSR proposal on that question.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.