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**FIRST COMMITTEE 961st  
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. DELGADO (Philippines) said that the Philippines, under its Constitution, had renounced war as an instrument of national policy and that it had always stood for disarmament, even a partial and gradual disarmament, as well as for the complete banning of the use of nuclear energy for other than peaceful purposes.

2. There were two axioms on disarmament based on historical facts: one was that an armaments race inevitably led to war; the other was that disarmament was possible only if the Powers principally concerned submitted to a superior authority. The accumulation of nuclear armaments of ever-increasing destructiveness had completely abolished the margin of safety enjoyed by earlier generations. Under those circumstances, the role of the small Powers was to repeat again and yet again to the great Powers that the time to disarm was now, before someone started a war out of miscalculation, fear, anger or madness.

3. The second axiom revealed the importance of the role which had devolved upon the United Nations. While the destructive power of armaments had increased, the

means to enforce order in the world had dwindled to the mere power of moral persuasion. The only logical answer to that increasing disproportion was the institution of world government. Whatever cynics might think, the day would come when a supranational authority would have exclusive power to dispose of nuclear weapons.

4. Any partial measure was worthy of attention from Governments. But no real progress could be made unless States were prepared to surrender a certain portion of their sovereignty. It was the need to make that sacrifice that rendered the problem of disarmament so difficult to solve.

5. Disarmament could not take place without the agreement of the "nuclear Powers". Such an agreement presupposed an equality of sacrifice by both sides. Unfortunately, it was all too human for either side not to make a proposal which did not confer some advantage upon it, and it was equally human to suspect, for that reason, any proposal from the other side. That was where the small Powers had a part to play as catalysts.

6. It would be an illusion to believe that the suspension of nuclear test explosions and the prevention of surprise attack would finally dispose of the disarmament problem. The representative of India had described the discontinuance of nuclear tests as a proximate objective (952nd meeting). It should be noted, however, that while the suspension or cessation of nuclear tests was almost immediately realizable, the nuclear weapons now existing in armouries could be used at any time and accordingly represented a danger far more proximate than the cumulative effect of radio-active fall-out.

7. His delegation hoped that the Committee would reach agreement on a common text. That appeared to be an essential step in view of the forthcoming conferences in Geneva. To be satisfactory, a draft resolution should first commend the decision of the Powers concerned to hold the conferences at Geneva, and express the hope that those conferences would reach the broadest possible agreement on the necessary practical measures. Secondly, the draft should express the hope that the agreements reached would lead to a renewed effort to solve the central problems of disarmament, including the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, the destruction of existing stocks and the progressive reduction of all armaments, all under an effective system of inspection and control. Finally, the text should call upon the great Powers to resume disarmament negotiations as soon as possible. That might be effected under such conditions as might prove generally acceptable in the course of the discussions contemplated in the Mexican proposal (A/C.1/L.208).

8. The Irish draft resolution concerning the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to study the dangers inherent in the further dissemination of nuclear weapons

(A/C.1/L.206) and the Soviet Union draft resolution on the reduction of the military budgets of the four great Powers (A/C.1/L.204) involved problems of a political or technical character whose solution depended upon agreement on the central problems of disarmament.

9. It was with nations as with individuals: if they sought to do unto others as they would that others did unto them, then and then only would the full potential of human brotherhood be realized. That must not be forgotten, for whereas before, the alternatives had been peace or war, the choice now lay between peace and annihilation.

10. Mr. JOOSTE (Union of South Africa) had been impressed by the fact that the majority of speakers had stressed how important it was to achieve as soon as possible a solution, if only a temporary one, of the disarmament problem. The descriptions of the consequences of a modern war given by some representatives had been particularly convincing.

11. His delegation, like many others, looked upon the success 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, as a proof of progress. There was another encouraging development: the United Kingdom and the United States had announced that they were prepared to suspend nuclear and thermonuclear weapons tests for one year. That would be done subject to certain conditions, one of which, the simultaneous suspension of the Soviet tests, need not be an obstacle in view of the high priority given by the USSR to the cessation of tests. With regard to later arrangements for prolonging the initial suspension, it was to be hoped that no Government would refuse to participate. It would be a mistake to consider the suspension of test explosions as constituting disarmament, but there could be no doubt that an agreement on the subject would considerably increase confidence and should on that account be welcomed.

12. It was unfortunate that the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States had been accused of seeking to deny to the United Nations its rightful place in dealing with the disarmament problem. There was no foundation for those accusations. In any case, there could be no question that the United Nations had an essential contribution to make to the solution of the problem. Even if the great Powers sometimes operated outside the framework of the Organization, their work must continue to be in collaboration with it. For those reasons it was regrettable that the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee had discontinued their work.

13. Disarmament was primarily the responsibility of the great Powers. Their reactions alone could make a world war inevitable. Only they could produce and accumulate large stocks of nuclear or conventional armaments. Only they could devise an effective form of disarmament accompanied by the necessary guarantees. Finally, the armaments race was confined to the great Powers, who alone had the power to bring it to an end.

14. In those circumstances, nothing should be done that might impede the efforts of the great Powers to arrive at an agreement. None of them would agree to disarm, even partially, on a unilateral basis. To do so would be suicidal or, at least, would invite aggression.

One could not dispute the arguments of those who sincerely sought peace, but, having no guarantee against aggression, regarded nuclear weapons as their only protection.

15. The cessation of nuclear weapons tests would not prevent stockpiles from being accumulated. Nor would it solve the problem of conventional armaments. It was logical to conclude that the cessation of tests must be linked to the solution of the other disarmament problems.

16. Some representatives had expressed the hope that a joint draft resolution might be achieved. But such an attempt might serve chiefly to crystallize disagreement on matters of principle. The Soviet Union and thirteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.203 and Corr.1) and the thirteen-Power draft (A/C.1/L.202/Rev.1 and Add.1) insisted on the immediate discontinuance of nuclear tests without providing adequate guarantees, whereas the United States and the United Kingdom offered to suspend testing for one year if the Soviet Union would agree to do the same.

17. In the circumstances, the delegation of the Union of South Africa considered that the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) defined the safest way of encouraging the "nuclear Powers" to seek agreement, since the attainment of the fundamental aims of the United Nations in the matter of disarmament was even more important than an international agreement on the discontinuance of test explosions.

18. The amendments proposed by Ireland (A/C.1/L.207) to the seventeen-Power draft raised a very interesting point but one which it was not, perhaps, the right time to consider. Since there could be no certainty that existing stockpiles would be reduced, it would hardly be reasonable to deny to those who wished to strengthen their defence the right to do so.

19. With regard to the proposal, made by Ireland in its draft resolution (A/C.1/L.206), to establish an *ad hoc* committee to study the dangers inherent in the further dissemination of nuclear weapons, he wondered whether the matter should not perhaps be dealt with by existing bodies. For the same reason, the Mexican draft resolution (A/C.1/L.208) deserved the utmost attention.

20. As far as the reduction of the military budgets of the great Powers was concerned, a reduction of 10 or 15 per cent would do little to restore confidence. That question would have to be carefully studied before any decision could be taken. It would have to be considered, for instance, whether the proposed reduction might not prove detrimental to the security of certain countries.

21. Of all the drafts submitted, the seventeen-Power draft resolution was undeniably the most realistic and appropriate. The delegation of the Union of South Africa therefore supported it, while reserving the position of its Government, which would not participate in the projected discussions, on any matter which might be taken up later.

22. Prince ALY KHAN (Pakistan) said that, while no progress in disarmament was possible unless the great Powers wished to achieve agreement, the voice of the smaller countries, which was the voice of suffering humanity, should also be heard.

23. Although the United Nations had had as yet no more success than the League of Nations in arriving at complete agreement on disarmament, there was none the less evidence of an evolution of ideas which gave hope of positive achievements in the relatively near future.

24. Despite the differences that had again manifested themselves among the great Powers during the debate, the Pakistan delegation was pleased to see that the United States and the United Kingdom were not averse to extending the technical approach to the study of possible reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments. That much was apparent from the statements made by the United States representative on 10 October (945th meeting) and by the representative of the United Kingdom on 14 October (948th meeting). The Soviet Union had also made concrete proposals for a substantial reduction of the armed forces, armaments and military budgets of the great Powers. In spite of the fairly wide disagreement that still persisted, especially in regard to the interrelationship of a settlement of outstanding political questions and the successive stages of armaments reduction, the Pakistan delegation believed, with the representative of the United States, that it was possible to scale down armed forces and conventional armaments appreciably without awaiting political settlements. It therefore seemed the appropriate time to apply the successful technical approach to the problem of conventional weapons and armed forces.

25. Since the fundamental differences between the great Powers on halting production of fissionable material for weapons purposes and the conversion of existing stocks to peaceful uses gave little hope that an agreement in the nuclear field of disarmament could be concluded and implemented in the space of one year, only progress in the field of conventional armaments and armed forces would make it possible to extend the suspension of nuclear weapons tests beyond the one-year period. Technical experts should therefore meet as soon as possible to study and recommend measures of inspection and control to accompany any agreement which might be reached in the conventional field of disarmament.

26. However, the Pakistan delegation agreed with the representatives of Sweden (946th meeting) and Iran (951st meeting) that the period of one year suggested by the United States and the United Kingdom was far too short for satisfactory progress to be made towards real disarmament. It accordingly hoped that the United States and the United Kingdom would not take a rigid position. The representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States had, however, given reassurances in that respect.

27. However, in order to find a meeting ground consistent with the security of the parties, the Pakistan delegation appealed to the Governments concerned to agree to renew the period of suspension of nuclear tests after the first twelve months, provided: (1) that satisfactory progress had been made towards the establishment of an effective system of international control over the suspension of nuclear weapons tests, and (2) that negotiations, political or technical, were in fact taking place in good faith on the reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons, or on measures in the nuclear field of disarmament, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 1148 (XII).

28. What was most important in the present context was the result itself and not so much the manner in which it was to be achieved. If there was a chance of safeguarding the health of present and future generations by successive indefinite renewals of the suspension of tests, surely that chance should not be thrown away because a complete prohibition of tests for all time could not be brought about at one stroke.

29. The world undoubtedly had far more to fear from existing stocks and continued production of nuclear weapons than from the radiation which resulted from test explosions. Hence, the real risk was that of surprise attack. It was essential, therefore, to find the means as soon as possible of guarding against that risk, and it was to be hoped that the efforts of the experts who would meet at Geneva on 10 November 1958 would be crowned with success. By reason of the present-day interdependence of all countries, large and small, and of the fact that a large number of countries were linked together in defensive alignments, the smaller Powers had as much to fear from a surprise attack as the "nuclear Powers".

30. If the great Powers could agree to a substantial measure of disarmament, the smaller nations could also reduce their military budgets and use the resources thus released for promoting the well-being of their peoples. Pakistan, for its part, would not fail to make a positive response.

31. The seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205), of which Pakistan was one of the sponsors, was consistent with the suggestion he had just put forward in regard to the renewal of periods of suspension of nuclear tests. On the other hand, since it was essential that the United Nations should maintain a continuing interest during the period between the sessions of the General Assembly, there was need for a formula which would allow the widest possible scope for negotiations among the great Powers, without setting up a machinery too cumbersome to be really effective. In the opinion of the Pakistan delegation, one of the best ways of achieving those objectives was to make use of the experience of the Secretary-General, who represented the interests of the United Nations as a whole.

32. Mr. SYLVAIN (Haiti) said that a reading of the abundant documentation on the disarmament debates left one with a contradictory impression. The great Powers, upon which the fate of mankind now depended, were aware of the danger of the armaments race and were in agreement as to the need of limiting that danger pending its elimination, but they were not in agreement as to the means to be used in averting the catastrophe or even in postponing it. The situation was tragic because the disagreement as to the means was no different in its consequences from the disagreement as to the ends, and that disagreement kept alive and intensified the distrust between the great Powers.

33. Nevertheless, the Haitian delegation persisted in its belief that it was not impossible for the great Powers to make mutual concessions in order to arrive at an agreement. The Government of Haiti considered that the urgent task of all the States Members of the United Nations which neither manufactured nor possessed atomic weapons was to bring about an atmosphere of tolerance and good will likely to facilitate a compromise solution.

34. In that connexion, the Haitian delegation commended the Mexican delegation for its proposal that the representatives of the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union should meet with a view to considering possibilities of resuming disarmament negotiations within the framework of the United Nations (A/C.1/L.208).

35. Co-operation between the great Powers was indispensable. A General Assembly resolution which lacked the unanimous support of the "nuclear Powers" would be merely one more resolution, ineffectual and without purpose. The slightest concession as to form on the part of the Soviet representative, the slightest change in wording on the part of the United States representative, had a much greater bearing on the immediate future of mankind than any resolution by which one of the great Powers did not consider itself bound.

36. In the various draft resolutions before the Committee there was one common factor: the manifest desire to put an end to the armaments race. That encouraging circumstance induced him to propose the formation, within the First Committee, of a committee of good offices—or rather, a committee "of good will"—to work out, in conjunction with the delegations of the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, a draft resolution which could be adopted unanimously. The members of that committee would be appointed either by the Chairman or by the First Committee itself, on the basis of a fair apportionment designed to dispel any distrust.

37. On the other hand, the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205), which went into greater detail than the draft of the thirteen Powers and that of the Soviet Union, could be considered as incorporating the general statements and recommendations of the latter Powers and could serve as a basis for discussion. Account would be taken of the Irish amendments (A/C.1/L.207) and the Irish draft resolution (A/C.1/L.206), and also the amendment proposed by seven Latin-American delegations, including the delegation of Haiti (A/C.1/L.209).

38. Mr. VIROLAINEN (Finland) said that his delegation was willing to support, and, if possible, facilitate any efforts designed to bring about reasonable and practicable solutions in the field of disarmament. He considered that any decision in the field of disarmament should have the support of the great Powers and regretted, in that connexion, that the People's Republic of China had not been admitted to the United Nations.

39. In view of the results obtained by the Conference of Experts at Geneva, his delegation hoped that the "nuclear Powers" would conclude an agreement on the controlled cessation of nuclear test explosions. It felt, nevertheless, that partial measures were only legitimate when they constituted a sincere effort to reach the ultimate goal, i.e., the strengthening of peace and security.

40. The Finnish Government had expressed its views on disarmament, *inter alia*, in a joint statement made in the spring of the present year by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the five Scandinavian countries. Reference had been made to the opinions expressed in that statement in the Finnish Prime Minister's answer to the announcement made by the Prime Minister of the

Soviet Union of the discontinuance by his country of nuclear test explosions. A statement summarizing the opinions expressed in connexion with a visit by President Kekkonen to the Soviet Union likewise stressed the necessity for constructive and efficient measures of disarmament and, especially, for concluding an agreement putting an end to nuclear test explosions.

41. Though it was essential to put an end to atomic and hydrogen weapons tests, it should not be forgotten that the race in conventional armaments was a terrible danger to mankind and an unduly heavy burden on the peoples. His delegation therefore hoped that the parties concerned would be able to find a compromise solution so that true progress could be made in that field.

42. Mr. GARIN (Portugal) felt that armaments could only be substantially reduced when effective systems of inspection and control had been established and the most important political problems now dividing the two camps had been solved. The present atmosphere of distrust made control indispensable. Furthermore, illegitimate and morally unjustifiable political situations, such as the division of Germany, gave rise to international tension; that tension resulted in more armaments, which in turn added to the tension—a deplorable vicious circle. The situation required a realistic approach. In that respect he thought the question of disarmament could be solved only by stages and that, at each stage, over-all balancing measures must be applied, since all aspects of disarmament were interlinked.

43. His delegation deplored the fact that the United Nations had made no progress towards a solution of the main problem of disarmament since the twelfth session of the General Assembly; it particularly regretted that resolution 1148 (XII) on principles for a first-stage disarmament agreement had remained a dead letter, for it was convinced that an agreement of that kind should not present any insurmountable technical or political difficulties. He therefore hoped that the resolution would be eventually carried out.

44. His delegation attached the greatest importance to the offer made by the United Kingdom and the United States to suspend nuclear weapons tests for one year if the Soviet Union would do the same. That step and the application of whatever system of control the conference which was to convene at Geneva on 31 October 1958 might adopt could result in the final cessation of tests, provided that sufficient progress was made towards disarmament. The latter condition was essential, since the objective was true disarmament: that is, the cessation of the production of fissionable material for military purposes, the gradual conversion of stocks of such material to peaceful purposes and the reduction of nuclear weapons, conventional weapons and armed forces, all such steps being taken within a system of control.

45. He hoped that the Soviet Union would accept the offer of the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States instead of insisting that the Powers concerned should end their tests unconditionally before the conclusion even of an agreement on control, since that was liable to undermine the forthcoming Geneva conference at a time when the whole world was looking forward to the success of that conference. If it was successful and if the technical study, which was to take place at Geneva commencing on 10 November 1958, of

measures for reducing the danger of a surprise attack yielded results, further technical studies could be undertaken on other aspects of the control of disarmament and the necessary agreements could be drawn up. The General Assembly was morally obliged to encourage those efforts.

46. His delegation was therefore inclined to support the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205), which also had the following merits: it reaffirmed the responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament; it established a link between the United Nations and the new negotiations taking place outside the Organization; and it was a reminder that the main

goal was still the establishment of a balanced and effectively controlled system of disarmament. His delegation was also ready to support the seven-Power amendment (A/C.1/L.209) to that draft resolution as it was very important to establish a link between disarmament and the improvement of living conditions in the world, particularly in the less developed countries.

47. In conclusion, he hoped that the Soviet Union would agree to take part in the work of the Disarmament Commission in its reorganized form.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.