

Monday, 21 October 1957,
at 10.50 a. m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

Agenda item 24:

Regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments; conclusion of an international convention (treaty) on the reduction of armaments and the prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other weapons of mass destruction (continued):

- (a) Report of the Disarmament Commission;
- (b) Expansion of the membership of the Disarmament Commission and of its Sub-Committee;
- (c) Collective action to inform and enlighten the peoples of the world as to the dangers of the armaments race, and particularly as to the destructive effects of modern weapons;
- (d) Discontinuance under international control of tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons

Page

49

Chairman: Mr. Djatal ABDOH (Iran).

AGENDA ITEM 24

Regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments; conclusion of an international convention (treaty) on the reduction of armaments and the prohibition of atomic, hydrogen and other weapons of mass destruction (A/3630 and Corr.1, A/3657, A/3674/Rev.1, A/3685, A/C.1/793, A/C.1/L.174, A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.176/Rev.2, A/C.1/L.177, A/C.1/L.178/Rev.1; A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) (continued):

- (a) Report of the Disarmament Commission;
- (b) Expansion of the membership of the Disarmament Commission and of its Sub-Committee;
- (c) Collective action to inform and enlighten the peoples of the world as to the dangers of the armaments race, and particularly as to the destructive effects of modern weapons;
- (d) Discontinuance under international control of tests of atomic and hydrogen weapons

1. Mr. MAURER (Romania) said that the armaments race had become a scourge of contemporary mankind. In under-developed countries, which were forced to spend their small incomes on armaments, it aggravated poverty and want, it produced symptoms of financial strangulation in many of the smaller, more advanced countries, and even in the rich industrialized countries it gave rise to serious economic disturbances. Although much had been said about "atoms for peace", mankind had benefited very little as yet from the great discoveries in the field of atomic physics.

2. Despite the fact that the historic victory of Soviet science had launched mankind on the conquest of outer space, opinions had been voiced calling, not for the establishment of conditions conducive to fruitful co-operation between the world's scientists for the benefit of mankind, but for ever greater increases in military expenditures and for a research programme aimed at the discovery of even more effective weapons of destruction.

3. A further intensification of the armaments race, leading to increased military spending by a number of countries would seriously affect others whose economies were bound to theirs. The gap between the majority of countries and the Powers which were in the forefront of modern science and technology would be widened and more highly-perfected weapons of destruction would be accumulated.

4. That mad race must be halted. Instead of the narrow calculations of a Power or group of Powers, the opinion that should prevail in the United Nations was that nuclear weapons were barbarous means of mass destruction which must be condemned. Despite all efforts to make the people accept the idea that nuclear weapons, including the so-called "tactical" or "clean" bombs, were a reality in the armaments of certain States, and despite proposals to legalize, in one form or another, the use of those weapons, nuclear war remained a monstrosity which must be condemned.

5. The decision which must be taken on that imperative demand of all mankind could not be left to the discretion of one Power or group of Powers. It was the duty of the United Nations to throw the whole weight of its authority into the scales in order to attain the categorical prohibition of nuclear weapons and a condemnation of nuclear war from which no appeal could be made.

6. Not only the principles of ethics and international law, but the realities of the present situation, made the prohibition of nuclear weapons imperative. It was no longer possible to entertain the illusion that nuclear weapons might constitute a guarantee of safety for one Power or another. The guarantee of peace lay not in the nuclear arms race but in the hatred of all peoples for war and in the policy of the peace-loving countries, among whom were the socialist countries.

7. The representatives of the Powers members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) rejected the idea of outlawing atomic weapons and condemning nuclear war on the ground that that would not satisfy their interests. But the question facing the United Nations was to find a solution which was in the interests of all countries, whether or not they possessed atomic weapons. Obviously, those interests did not coincide; the mere fact that the NATO Powers were headed by colonialist countries which had waged and were waging armed struggles against the peoples seeking to free themselves from colonial domination proved that the interests of those Powers could not be offered as a valid argument in the disarmament question.

8. Two conflicting methods had been offered as practical solutions of the disarmament question. The first was that outlined by the NATO Powers in their proposals of 29 August 1957 (DC/113, annex 5), which envisaged the solution of the question as indivisible and simultaneous. The Soviet Union had also submitted such a comprehensive programme.

9. The second method was that put forward by the USSR, which envisaged the taking of those partial and limited steps for which the objective conditions for fulfilment existed, as first steps towards a comprehensive disarmament programme.

10. To connect the adoption of measures for which objective conditions existed with the adoption of measures on which significant differences still remained was to block the road to any solution of the problem. On the other hand, the adoption of any measures which could be agreed on separately and without any conditions whatsoever would break the present deadlock and help to solve the entire problem. His delegation therefore firmly supported the constructive approach proposed by the Soviet Union and believed that its adoption could lead to practical steps for disarmament. The first measures which might be taken were the suspension of nuclear testing for a period of two or three years and a solemn pledge by the atomic Powers not to use nuclear weapons for an initial period of five years. It was undeniable that objective conditions for the fulfilment of both measures now existed.

11. The objections raised by the Western Powers to the temporary suspension of nuclear tests were untenable. Such suspension would prevent the manufacture of even more dreadful nuclear weapons and the perfecting of those already manufactured. Moreover, as the United Kingdom representative had stated (869th meeting), all the States concerned were agreed in principle on such a partial measure; therefore in the absence of an agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons from all armaments, as suggested by the Soviet Union, it would at least be logical to adopt that partial measure on which there was agreement in principle.

12. The objection of the Western Powers that the suspension of the tests would be unrealistic because it would upset the "balance of security" was equally groundless. Since suspension would apply equally to all the States concerned and the same potential would be subtracted from each, the relationship of equality between them would remain intact. Moreover, logic showed that it was not the suspension of nuclear test explosions, but their continuation, that would inevitably upset that balance, for if the discontinuance of nuclear tests created equal conditions for both sides in that respect, then the continuation of the tests, as facts had proven, continually altered the balance of forces between the nuclear Powers.

13. Any draft resolution aimed at effecting a temporary suspension of tests must be effective and immediately workable. The Japanese draft resolution (A/C.1/L.174) did not achieve that purpose: it put forward a number of conditions which had the effect of postponing effective action indefinitely. The ambiguous position of the Japanese delegation was surprising when it was recalled that the Japanese had been the first tragic victims of atomic attack.

14. The Romanian Government favoured a substantial reduction of armed forces, armaments and military expenditures. It had already reduced Romania's armed forces. It regretted the theory according to which the carrying out of a consistent reduction of armaments to be made in the second stage should depend upon the solution of outstanding political questions. It supported a reduction of the forces of the United States and the Soviet Union to 2.1 million men and those of

the United Kingdom and France to 700,000 so long as the problems of Germany and the Middle East remained unresolved.

15. Such a reduction should not be made conditional on a solution of the political questions in dispute among the great Powers. The United Nations Charter specifically provided that such political disputes should be resolved by peaceful means. To suggest that disarmament should be held up pending their solution was to reiterate the NATO policy of negotiating from "positions of strength", a policy based on the force of arms. Furthermore, since the list of outstanding political questions could be constantly lengthened, they could always serve as pretexts for deferring practical action on disarmament and a vicious circle was thus created.

16. The Romanian Government also supported the liquidation of military bases on foreign soil. The bases established by the Western Powers in territory often many thousands of miles distant were intended not to preserve their security, but to intimidate and threaten not only the socialist States, but all countries desirous of safeguarding their independence, and to serve as springboards for aggressive imperialism. Romania welcomed the proposal, made by Poland in May 1957 and supported by Czechoslovakia, to put an end to the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons on their territories provided that a similar commitment were undertaken by the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, in accordance with the latter's previous proposals. It also supported the Soviet Union's proposals (A/C.1/793) for a reduction in the forces of the four Powers stationed in Germany as well as in the forces of the Western Powers stationed in NATO countries and in the forces of the Soviet Union stationed in the territories of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty.

17. Finally, Romania was convinced that, given a genuine desire for real disarmament, an effective system of control of disarmament acceptable to all parties could be worked out, and it was prepared to co-operate in such a system.

18. The Romanian delegation believed that the necessary conditions existed for practical steps towards disarmament and that the time was ripe for initial measures to be taken. New possibilities had arisen; the First Committee's debates could and should contribute in large measure towards the realization of those possibilities.

19. Mr. NAJIB-ULLAH (Afghanistan) emphasized that, despite the genuine desire of all States that agreement should be reached on disarmament, a solution was being impeded by a lack of mutual confidence between the two blocs of countries concerned and by the absence of any spirit of compromise. In view of the interrelation of all aspects of disarmament and control, agreement in principle at least was essential. Moreover, the testing of nuclear weapons had been shown by scientific investigation to be harmful to human life and had to be stopped. Although disarmament was primarily the concern of the great Powers which produced those weapons, all States, regardless of their geographical position, had a duty to contribute to a solution and should endeavour to discharge that duty.

20. In the belief that the great Powers were sincere in their purposes and attached to the cause of peace,

Afghanistan appealed to them to attempt to examine the problem of disarmament objectively rather than in the light of their political differences and respective strategic positions. It further appealed to all States to approach the question with objectivity and to discuss it with restraint in order not to aggravate ill-feeling, which obstructed positive progress. He called upon the great Powers to continue to seek a compromise through the existing organs. Unless they accepted a compromise, the arms race would continue and would eventually lead to world suicide.

21. Mr. MATSUDAIRA (Japan), replying to comments on his delegation's draft resolution (A/C.1/L.174) made by the representatives of Hungary (871st meet-

ing), Czechoslovakia (872nd meeting) and Romania, said that, in submitting the draft resolution, his delegation had not been concerned with propaganda in any form; its main object was to bring about the actual suspension of nuclear tests at the earliest possible date. He could not agree with the Romanian representative's statement that the proposal was ambiguous, nor could he accept any criticism of his Government's method of expressing and formulating the feelings of the Japanese people. He pointed out that the Japanese draft resolution was simple and clear-cut, and that was its most outstanding characteristic.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.