

Friday, 18 October 1957,
at 10.45 a. m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
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	45

Chairman: Mr. Djatal ABDUH (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. WINIEWICZ (Poland) emphasized the tremendous development of war techniques and strategic concepts, which had taken place since the opening of the atomic era. The disparity between the tempo of the armaments race and the progress made in the disarmament discussions had been increasing year by year and was a matter of the gravest concern. The very heavy cost of modern armaments had retarded the development of many countries and had had a serious effect upon the living standards of the people. That was clear from the Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-fourth session,^{1/} which indicated that the aid to under-developed countries had totalled \$5,200 million in the period 1954-1956, while, as had been mentioned in the Disarmament Commission \$85,000 million were spent

annually on armaments. The military expenditures of some States exceeded 60 per cent of their budgets.

2. Every State, irrespective of its social and political system, had a basic interest in the disarmament problem. Realistic and concrete measures were therefore urgently required for its solution. In view of the difficulty of concluding a general disarmament agreement within a reasonably short period of time, partial measures would have to be considered. Poland attached special importance to the following measures: a temporary ban on the use of nuclear weapons, the discontinuance of nuclear tests and the establishment of zones of limited armaments.

3. Nuclear weapons were becoming ever more widespread. They were losing their exclusively strategic character, and the organization of the armies of the great Powers was being increasingly adapted to their use. The Polish people was especially concerned at the plans to equip the West German army with atomic and thermo-nuclear weapons. States which had hitherto used only conventional armaments would ultimately be obliged to re-equip their armies, and that would increase the danger of destruction by nuclear weapons, even in local wars. The peoples were fully aware of that danger, and the Governments of States Members of the United Nations stood to gain by taking their views into account.

4. While the resolutions previously adopted by the General Assembly had always stressed the need for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and their elimination from the armaments of States, the recent proposals presented by the Western Powers at London in the Sub-Committee (DC/113, annex 5) virtually admitted the possibility of nuclear warfare. The twenty-four-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) did not provide for the prohibition or elimination of such weapons. It was, however, obvious that the risk of total annihilation could not be diminished while a large part of the existing stocks of weapons could still be used for military purposes.

5. According to the Western Powers, States needed to retain thermo-nuclear weapons to maintain what had been called the balance of security. Such reasoning was not convincing. Why should the need of counterbalancing the superiority of the other side be stressed, if reductions of armed forces and armaments were to be balanced and the prohibition of nuclear weapons was to be equally binding on all parties? Moreover, many States which used that argument were in reality attempting to secure military superiority for themselves.

6. That was not the spirit in which progress could be made towards a solution. What was needed was a positive act of mutual confidence, such as the renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons, if only for a given period. That proposal had been made by the Soviet

^{1/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes, agenda item 6, document E/3047.

Union (A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1), and his delegation considered it opportune and worthy of support. Such a measure would create an atmosphere of confidence propitious to the continuation of disarmament negotiations, which would be concerned with means of settlement of the most difficult questions, such as the total prohibition of manufacture of nuclear weapons and proper control measures.

7. The prohibition of nuclear weapons would also lead towards the solution of the problem of intercontinental missiles or artificial satellites, which would become a threat to mankind only if they were converted into nuclear weapons.

8. The United Kingdom representative had said (869th meeting) that he did not consider unconditional, even though temporary, suspension of tests of nuclear and hydrogen weapons as a disarmament measure. But it was clear that the tests were not being carried out for peaceful purposes. Nor could it be said that they were experiments with a view to the production of "cleaner" bombs. The representative of India had already (873rd meeting) subjected that argument to devastating criticism: all human beings without exception were endangered by the existence of nuclear weapons and by the radiation resulting from the tests. Moreover, the suspension of tests would be an answer to the appeals issued by prominent scientists of all countries.

9. Judging from the statements made, it would seem that the First Committee might be prepared to adopt a draft resolution on that subject. Such a draft should be designed to put the necessary measures into effect within the shortest possible time and should not link them with the solution of other more complicated problems.

10. With regard to partial disarmament measures in Europe, it should be noted the world armaments race favoured the development of militarist and revanche tendencies in the Federal Republic of Germany. New plans provided for equipping military units of that country with atomic weapons. The Polish Government had in May 1957 proposed a prohibit the production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons on its territory, provided that the two German States would agree to follow suit.

11. The Czechoslovak Republic had in May 1957 given the same undertaking and the German Democratic Republic had taken a similar attitude. If that measure was accepted by the Federal Republic of Germany, the nuclear armaments race might be stopped in the centre of Europe, the meeting ground of the two great political and military groups in the world.

12. The Polish delegation attached the greatest importance to a solution such as that of establishing a zone of limited armaments in Europe. Poland was ready to co-operate in drawing up plans for such a zone, to work for a common decision and to subject its territory to the measures of control agreed upon, should the boundaries of the zone embrace its territory.

13. Lastly, the European disarmament and security problem would admit much more easily of solution if the troops stationed on foreign territory were more easily of solution if the troops stationed on foreign territory were gradually withdrawn, as the repre-

sentative of the Soviet Union had proposed (867th meeting). Europe played a key part with regard to world peace, as had been demonstrated by the last two years, which had originated in that region and had developed into world wars.

14. The Polish delegation reserved the right to comment on the draft resolutions at a later stage. It would merely point out that no positive result could be obtained by one side's attempting to impose a solution on the other side. It was regrettable therefore that some speakers had presented the four-Power proposals of 29 August 1957 (DC/113, annex 5) as if they constituted an ultimatum, and all the more regrettable because the proposals did not even touch upon the most important problems.

15. It was significant that the representatives of the smaller nations had for the most part not yet participated in the discussion, but it would be a mistake to construe that fact as indicating resignation on their part or to conclude that all arguments had been exhausted. The great Powers should seek new ways of dealing with the problem in order to make it possible to conduct more fruitful negotiations than those conducted by the Sub-Committee in London. The Polish delegation hoped that the draft resolutions to be adopted by the First Committee would facilitate future negotiations,

16. Mr. PELAEZ (Philippines) said that the position of the smaller nations was difficult in the presence of the two atomic colossi that were eyeing each other malevolently across a trembling world. But they had the right and the duty to speak frankly and humbly but firmly, in order that the present debate might prove useful.

17. Although the Philippine delegation was a co-sponsor of the twenty-four-Power draft resolution, he did not intend to analyse in detail the proposals contained in that text; other sponsors of the draft had already done so. He would discuss instead the basic issues of disarmament as a citizen of a small country whose geographical position had not been a matter of choice, which did not have any designs on the territory of any other country, which cherished its freedom and way of life and preferred those values to any others. The Philippines was a free nation of 20 million people in a part of the world where more than 600 million people had fallen under totalitarian rule and where millions of others were in danger of suffering the same fate. Because the Philippines preferred liberty to tyranny, it had concluded a defensive treaty with the United States and had formed in South-East Asia an organization of collective defence with seven other countries. In order to give effect to those defensive arrangements, the Philippines had agreed to the establishment of American bases on its territory. Those facts were well-known; there was no mystery about them. All the measures taken were intended solely to strengthen the national security of the Philippines.

18. The Soviet Union was asking all countries to accept the principle of peaceful coexistence and had proposed (A/C.1/L.175/Rev.1), as a first step in disarmament, that States possessing nuclear weapons should temporarily but unconditionally renounce the use of atomic and hydrogen weapons for five years. The idea was that the regulation of conventional armaments, the disposal of existing stockpiles of atomic and nuclear

weapons, the production of fissionable material and the establishment of an effective system of inspection and control could be discussed during the five-year period, while the great Powers would draw up a general international agreement.

19. The question was how—since there was unanimous agreement that mutual distrust and suspicion were the basic causes of the present impasse—the principal parties concerned could be expected to agree an outright declaration to assume an obligation not to use nuclear weapons, without the establishment of a system of mutual checks and inspection that would ensure compliance with such an obligation?

20. It was obvious that there could not be peaceful coexistence before disarmament. The Soviet proposal was based on the same principle, namely, that disarmament or the reduction of armaments could be treated separately from the question of international inspection and control. The Philippine delegation had been gratified to learn that the Soviet Union had made concessions during the London negotiations of the Sub-Committee. However, a close examination of the scope of its concessions led to the regrettable conclusion that the Soviet Union had not wholly abandoned its fundamental stand regarding inspection and control. That continued to be the crux of the problem.

21. It was eleven years since the Soviet Union had first proposed the immediate prohibition of atomic weapons, ^{2/} without inspection or control. It might perhaps have been advisable during the negotiations of the past eleven years to set aside the idea of immediate prohibition and to make a resolute attempt to find a solution to the practical problems of disarmament and the regulation of armaments. Failing immediate prohibition, there might possibly have been disarmament.

22. The proposal to suspend forthwith the testing of nuclear weapons might suffer the same fate if the facile but illusory notion of immediacy were not set aside. It was, in fact, that idea of immediacy, with its powerful propaganda appeal, which had distracted the Soviet negotiators from seeking earnestly to draw up a disarmament agreement that would allay the Western Powers' fear of surprise attack, a fear shared by the Philippines.

23. If the Soviet Union, by refusing to allay that fear, forced the countries of the free world to make a choice between two risks—that of forfeiting the means of defending their freedom or that of forfeiting their lives in a universal holocaust—it must assume responsibility for the terrible consequences that could result from the decision of the free countries to remain free. The Philippine delegation could not believe that the Soviet Union desired to force the free world to that dire extremity. It preferred to believe that the Soviet Union, whose people would perish with those of other countries in the event of the final and irreparable tragedy of a nuclear war, and which today, by means of its outer-space satellite, had the opportunity to inspect and closely observe the entire surfaces of the globe, would cease to oppose the prompt establishment of a system of inspection and control within the framework of an agreement on disarmament and the suspension of the testing of nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union at present occupied the rare and enviable position of being able to be both powerful and generous.

24. The objection had been made that the twenty-four-Power draft resolution did not recommend the total prohibition and elimination of atomic and nuclear weapons. But the measures referred to in the draft resolution were only an initial step towards a comprehensive international agreement on disarmament. It would be unrealistic to insist on total prohibition at the present time, when the parties concerned had not yet been able to agree on initial steps.

25. The Philippine delegation wished to make it clear that it was in favour of total elimination and prohibition of atomic and nuclear weapons, which should be the ultimate goal of disarmament; it was certainly not its intention that the draft resolution should be regarded as an ultimatum. It constituted a useful basis upon which the Powers concerned could resume their negotiations and ultimately reach a comprehensive agreement on disarmament.

26. The opinion had been voiced that the proposal for an inspection system designed to ensure that the sending of objects through outer space would be exclusively for peaceful purposes, should be made the subject of a separate agreement. That suggestion deserved a favourable reception as an encouraging forward step at a time when it was particularly necessary to endeavour to create an atmosphere of confidence and optimism.

27. In the opinion of the Philippine delegation, the enlargement of the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-committee was neither desirable nor necessary at the present time, since the present arrangements were entirely satisfactory.

28. Mr. SCHURMANN (Netherlands) said that it was difficult to remain optimistic when the road to agreement among the great Powers was still blocked by serious obstacles. At certain times during the current year, the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission had seemed quite near a beginning of agreement, and the hope of the world kindled as never before; but that hope had been dashed by the uncompromising reaction of the Soviet delegation both in London and New York.

29. Despite some misgivings, the Netherlands delegation remained confident that all was not lost. Although recent events had been discouraging, the Netherlands was inclined to attach greater importance to the fact that for some time in London agreement had seemed possible. The discussion in the Sub-Committee and the proposals submitted both by the Western Powers and by the Soviet Union had proved not only the usefulness of the Sub-Committee as at present constituted, but had also clearly demonstrated that on many important issues there had been a definite rapprochement. The final reply of the Soviet Union to the Western proposals had been an unpleasant surprise, but there was no call for discouragement. As the representative of India had already said (873rd meeting), what was at stake was not merely the drafting of treaties but human survival. What the First Committee was doing and what the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee were to do was not only to work out details of disarmament programmes but to reply to the question whether the peoples of the world were to go live in peace and security and without

^{2/} See Official Records of the Atomic Energy Commission, First Year, No. 2, second meeting, pp. 26-28.

the nameless fear of annihilation by nuclear or conventional arms, or whether humanity would slowly but surely pronounce and carry out its own death sentence.

30. The Netherlands delegation had noted with satisfaction that the great Powers which were members of the Sub-Committee had abandoned their attempt to establish a general and comprehensive disarmament programme and were instead first seeking agreement on some aspects of the question on which the differences might most promptly be resolved. It was encouraging, too, that the Sub-Committee had decided to consider those aspects separately rather than jointly, since that method seemed to promise better results. It had proved its value when the Sub-Committee reached agreement on a number of points and had come very close to agreement on others.

31. In the view of the Netherlands delegation, it was the duty of the General Assembly to request the Sub-Committee to take up its work where it had left off by giving it guidance and clearly specifying the primary objectives to be sought. As matters now stood, although there was peace there was no sense of security in the world and even the peace seemed unstable.

32. The feeling of insecurity might be due to the fact that in recent years there had been a lack of equilibrium between the great Powers. Nevertheless a certain balance had now been reached and gradual disarmament on a reciprocal basis would maintain it. That would be real starting point. For the first time, the countries most directly concerned might find it possible to initiate a programme which would leave them the sense of security while at the same time slowing down and finally stopping the armaments race and, in particular, the competition for nuclear supremacy. The Assembly must however beware of creating a false impression of impending success, as might be the case if it endorsed the idea that the mere suspension of nuclear tests, not linked in any way to the problem of disarmament, would in itself represent an important achievement.

33. Although the effects of radio-activity created by the test explosions had not yet been authoritatively established, there was no denying that that question aroused acute worry and fear in many quarters. Nevertheless the statesman who must make decisions in the matter should not be overcome by panic. Needless to say, the Netherlands Government too wished to have the tests suspended, but it was convinced that that measure, if taken in isolation as had been suggested to the Committee, would do nothing to promote world security. As explained by the representatives of the United States (866th meeting) and the United Kingdom (869th meeting), the mere suspension

of tests would not prevent the nuclear Powers from continuing their production of nuclear weapons and increasing their present stockpiles. In fact other countries might even begin to manufacture and stockpile those weapons.

34. A relationship must therefore be established between the suspension of nuclear tests and the basic disarmament issue, namely, the cessation of production of fissionable material for military purposes and the reduction of existing stocks by a gradual transfer to peaceful uses.

35. Moreover, because of the deep-rooted distrust between the great Powers, a mere declaration not to use atomic weapons, even a solemn declaration, would have no great value unless some means were provided to ensure enforcement. Even more, an undertaking not to use nuclear weapons in any circumstance might disturb the present equilibrium since it would clearly favour the party which was strongest in conventional arms. Countries that were weakest in that field would feel even less secure, with a resulting increase in distrust.

36. If clearly defined and set up, inspection and control could play an essential part in creating the mutual confidence needed for implementation of a plan for true disarmament.

37. In the view of the Netherlands delegation, it could not be contended that such control would constitute an infringement of the sovereign rights of any country: it might just as well be said that disarmament itself would be an infringement of those rights.

38. It was encouraging to note that on the principle of control the Western Powers and the Soviet Union were in agreement. Nevertheless, agreement in principle would have real significance only if effective steps were taken to organize inspection and control.

39. He congratulated the Belgian delegation on its initiative in presenting its draft resolution (A/3630/Corr.1), since there was a link between that text and the question of supervision and control.

40. The Netherlands delegation had joined with twenty-three other delegations in submitting the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Corr.1 and Add.1) requesting the Sub-Committee to renew its efforts along the same lines as earlier in 1957. His delegation was convinced that the ideas expressed in that document provided a solid and workable basis for negotiations and perhaps for ultimate agreement.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that the list of speakers would be closed on Tuesday, 22 October, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.