

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWELFTH SESSION

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Chairman: Mr. DJALAL ABDOLAH (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) (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. DE SANTA CRUZ (Spain) said that his delegation participated in the debate on disarmament in the First Committee with a deep sense of its responsibilities, in particular its responsibilities towards the Spanish people, which, despite its preoccupation with reconstruction and development at home, followed international events with keen interest and was as conscious as any other people of the need for genuine security against dangers beyond its control.

2. The great Powers were not alone in feeling a need for security. The need was felt no less urgently by other countries, but in their case there was a psychological difference: they did not bear the burden of decision, the awesome privilege of being able to push the world on the road to annihilation, a fact that increased the feeling of impotence with which they faced an unknown future. That was perhaps the underlying reason for the scepticism, opportunism, and moral

cowardice that was evident on all sides. Because of that state of affairs, the non-nuclear Powers, including Spain, which formed the overwhelming majority of countries, had a further responsibility. They had an inescapable obligation towards the international community; they could not be passive bystanders, but must sit in judgement on the actions, intentions and plans of the greater Powers and insist that their policies should be such as would promote the common good.

3. It was well known that the great Powers devoted considerable effort towards mobilizing world opinion in their favour. The small countries were the representatives of world opinion. Their strength lay in moral principles and in common sense.

4. His delegation's approach to the complex problem of disarmament was based on the premise that attention should be concentrated on what was feasible in the present circumstances. The meetings of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission had shown that partial agreement could be achieved on essential issues. After long years of fruitless negotiation, a number of mutual concessions had been made and the problem had been brought within sight of solution. His delegation trusted that the hopes that had been raised would not be extinguished and that recent scientific achievements would tend to promote rather than to destroy the possibility of a final agreement.

5. It might be asked whether such a possibility existed. In the Disarmament Commission, the United States representative had summarized the mutual concessions which had done something to bridge the gap.^{1/} The Soviet Union had accepted the idea of a partial agreement, and had recognized the value of aerial and ground inspection as a means of preventing surprise attack. It had also admitted the need for control in order to ensure the effective supervision of the discontinuance of tests of nuclear weapons. The Western Powers, for their part, had accepted the idea of reducing the strength of their armed forces in subsequent stages, as the Soviet Union had requested. They had accepted the suspension of nuclear-weapons tests for two years, as proposed by the Soviet Union, subject to an agreement in principle for halting the production of new war material. They had also accepted the idea that the inspection system should include ground observation posts, as proposed by the Soviet Union.

6. On all those points there had been at least some meeting of minds. Nevertheless, fundamental differences persisted on two points: whether or not the discontinuance of tests of nuclear weapons should be linked to the cut-off of the production of fissionable materials for new weapons, and whether or not

^{1/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, 63rd meeting.

effective control should be instituted. The differences on those two points were indicative of the continuing lack of mutual confidence.

7. No State could honestly oppose a suspension of nuclear-weapons tests, a reduction of armaments or the prohibition of atomic weapons, if it was certain that those measures would be universal, simultaneous and effective. When countries were confronted with a question of life or death, cold facts were more persuasive than the most cogent arguments. The Soviet proposal for the renunciation of the use of atomic weapons was not realistic if it was not linked to a previous cut-off of the production of atomic weapons and the destruction of existing stockpiles. The present division of the political map of the world into defensive blocs was due to mistrust, to the need countries felt to ensure their safety and to follow realistic policies. As the Philippine representative had pointed out during the general debate, in the General Assembly (691st plenary meeting), that division worked greatly to the detriment of the economies of the participating countries. Countries did not join defensive blocs because it pleased them to do so; such blocs would persist until something better would take their place.

8. Unless linked to other measures, such as a cut-off of the production of new war material, the conversion of existing stockpiles for peaceful purposes and the creation of an effective system of inspection, it was likely that the mere discontinuance of tests of nuclear weapons would tend only to increase the apprehensions and mistrust of the countries which would be prevented from making further advances.

9. With regard to the question of control, he felt that in modern times countries were more willing to accept the regulation by supranational groups of matters which had hitherto been strictly national. Membership in international organizations was voluntary, and international control was a natural development. It was therefore hardly surprising that in the field of disarmament the idea of control appeared as the immediate solution of many problems. It appeared in all the proposals before the Committee: control to ensure compliance with the obligation to suspend nuclear tests; control of the cut-off of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes and of the use of existing materials for peaceful purposes; ground and aerial inspection to prevent surprise attack; supervision of the reduction of armed forces and armaments to agreed levels; and regulation of the launching of outer-space missiles. On some of those points, the Soviet and the Western positions coincided.

10. In reply to the objections of those who did not believe in the need for, or the possibility of, effective control, it should be pointed out that, contrary to what had been said, inspection did not necessarily imply domination. It was not a matter of compulsory inspection imposed and enforced by a single Power; inspection would be freely accepted by all and carried out by an international organization.

11. It was difficult to overstress the importance to the medium and small Powers of the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces to a level at which they could be only used for self-defence and not for aggressive purposes.

12. It was a mistake to believe that the development

of nuclear weapons made limited wars with conventional arms impossible. Such limited wars could still be fought in marginal areas for limited political objectives which were not vital to national power and for which no belligerent was prepared to run the risk of atomic war. Such wars were in fact the only type of conflict that had occurred since the first use of the atomic weapon. Unfortunately, such wars, although limited so far as the great Powers were concerned, had been total for the peoples directly involved in them.

13. Every word that had been spoken in the course of the present debate had been evidence of mankind's fear of war and desire for peace, tranquillity and security. The Spanish delegation, for its part, did not believe that war was inevitable. It would be lamentable if, at a time when the physical and biological sciences were enabling man to conquer the macrocosm of interstellar space and the microcosm of the genes, diplomats were unable in the field of the social sciences to translate into reality that part of the preamble to the Charter in which it was stated that the peoples of the United Nations were determined "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind" and which if it occurred a third time would destroy all mankind, belligerents and neutrals alike.

14. It was true that wars had recurred throughout history, but there was no proof that war was necessary to human society. War was not an inevitable biological phenomenon. It had been said that war was a law of all living things, that it acted as a release for overt violence and for a sort of relentless fury that drove living things to their mutual destruction and made violent death a constant companion of life. In that view, war was simply the consequence of the instinct for survival and reproduction common to men and animals alike, the instinct to kill in order to ensure the continuance of life. However, those who supported that view disregarded the fact that the human being had one particular characteristic which set him apart, whatever place might be assigned to man in the zoological ladder. It would never be possible to explain war from a purely biological point of view as another factor must be taken into account - the mind. Animals were subject to determination by natural laws while man was not ruled by the conditioned reflex. He was a free being. War was a conflict between the power and the free will of the communities of men known as States.

15. A famous Spanish philosopher had said that war was not an instinct, but an invention. Wars had always been willed by men. There had been reasons for every war, but whatever the reasons had been - psychological, economic or ideological - the objectives that man had sought through war could have been reached better or more easily by other means.

16. During the general debate in the Assembly the representative of Ireland had said (682nd plenary meeting) that when arms and armed forces reached certain proportions, explosion, as in the case of the critical mass of fissionable material, became inevitable. That was the old theory that war was the inevitable outcome of ill-considered techniques. But war was not the inevitable outcome of modern technology, for war had faced neolithic man with the same essential problems. Whether man used clubs or atomic bombs,

the jawbone of an ass or guided missiles, one thing was certain; war was not inevitable. However "automatic" arms might be, they did not go off by themselves. Arms made war more probable, more bloody and more destructive, but they did not make it inevitable.

17. War was an essentially political phenomenon and governed by political laws. It was a continuation of politics in which battles took the place of diplomatic notes. War was simply a violent form of politics, and politics was the expression of the will for power to carry out a specific plan for the common good. War was therefore an essentially social and historical phenomenon. Like all techniques used by man, it had its own methodology although it had no separate and distinct logic of its own. It was indeed no more than a tool.

18. If it was true that war was a political, social and historical phenomenon, a simple tool at the service of man's will and if it was true that the numerous biological, psychological, ideological and economic factors conditioning it would never entirely direct the course and eliminate freewill, war was therefore not inevitable, either in specific cases or in general, for it was the consequence of the particular structure of international society. If the many-sided political situation existing today became a single universal entity, war would be impossible. It was only through an effective political organization of the world as proposed by Pope Pius XII in a message of 1 September 1944 that it would be possible to abolish war for ever. His Holiness had stated that at the head of the community of peoples there should be a real and effective authority over member States which would nonetheless leave to each an equal right to relative sovereignty. That body which would be responsible for the maintenance of peace would crush any isolated or collective threat of aggression before it had time

to develop. A body of that kind already existed; it was the United Nations. As he said at the London Conference of the Inter-parliamentary Union, if there was a real desire to disarm, the first step to be taken was to arm the United Nations both morally and in fact. The grim prospects before the world at the present time should nevertheless serve as a stimulus. There was no other choice open.

19. His delegation approved the twenty-three Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179) in principle, but it reserved the right to comment on it later, if necessary. His delegation was in favour of the immediate discontinuance of tests of nuclear weapons pending the establishment of a system of control, including inspection posts, with the consent of the States concerned. It believed that a simultaneous effort must be made to halt the production of atomic weapons, to devote all future atomic manufacture to peaceful purposes, to destroy existing atomic arms or convert them to peaceful purposes, to reduce conventional weapons and armed forces to agreed levels, and to establish a system of inspection to eliminate the possibility of surprise attack and to ensure that outer-space missiles should be used exclusively for peaceful and scientific purposes.

20. Such measures could and must help in the achievement of the ultimate aim of the United Nations - a complete disarmament plan, with a legal system making force subject to the rule of law and providing the international community with the means to act in the common interest. No possibility of agreement must be neglected. The great military Powers must use every possible means to reach a settlement. His delegation earnestly hoped that their efforts would be successful.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.