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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) (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. SCHMIDT (Brazil) said that there had been much talk of peace and disarmament, but the situation had not substantially changed. One was tempted to believe that there were two worlds irremediably separated from each other: one world which did not stop talking and which made itself the interpreter of the deep feelings of all peoples, a world represented by the United Nations; and another world which went on arming itself and persisted in experimenting with increasingly deadly weapons. However, hope should not be abandoned; accordingly, on behalf of Brazil, which had not yet realized its full potential, and of those nations which did not feel that they carried sufficient weight as yet to make such a demand, he called for serious measures and not measures intended merely for effect or propaganda, so that the prevailing misunderstanding might not become a struggle to the death which would bring to an end man's reign on earth.

2. That difference of opinion, that dialogue without a common language between the West and the so-called people's democracies, could contribute to the improve-

ment of mankind if there were not so vast a gap between technical progress and moral progress. All dialogue was essential and indispensable. Unfortunately, the dialogue in question was becoming something extraordinarily evil. In all history, there was not a single example of an arms race which had not led to war. In the present case, however, the arms race would not end in a conflict which would leave behind it some possibility of reconstruction; it would be aggression directed indiscriminately against the entire human race. Also, the price of misunderstanding was getting higher. The financing of the development of those countries which needed outside assistance in order to grow and become stabilized was constantly being postponed because of the enormous expenditures which the threat of war made necessary.

3. The underlying reason for that situation was the fear engendered by the Soviet world's policy of ideological conquest and the manner in which the countries of the Soviet bloc dealt with human freedoms and inalienable political rights. The first essential, therefore, was to dispel that fear. Brazil was following with the greatest interest the Soviet Union's efforts towards economic development, but it had to oppose any disturbing manifestation of the USSR's foreign policy. Brazil followed no country and accepted no foreign instructions; it did not defend any kind of "international police force", except that which might be set up by the United Nations with the freely given consent of its Members.

4. Lastly, if any country should decide to reduce its aggressive potential, the Brazilian delegation would not regard that gesture as a favour because it was man's duty to his fellow man to find a means of removing the anxiety and threats which beset the world today.

5. The Brazilian delegation, recognizing that the three agenda items on disarmament allocated to the First Committee were closely interrelated, had supported the proposal that they should be discussed together. It was not, however, against adopting partial measures which might constitute progress towards the solution of the disarmament question, provided that they met certain criteria of applicability and effectiveness and made a positive contribution to the relaxation of international tension.

6. With regard to the disarmament question as a whole, he recalled that the Brazilian delegation had been one of the sponsors of the twenty-four-power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.179 and Add.1) submitted at the twelfth session as a compromise and as a practical basis for constructive work. That text had been the basis of General Assembly resolution 1148 (XII), which had, unfortunately, remained a dead letter: since July 1957, all United Nations activities in the field of disarmament had ceased. Nevertheless, it was gratifying to note that some progress had been made outside the United Nations in the matter of relations between United Nations resolutions and disarmament.
the great Powers. The Brazilian delegation shared the Secretary-General’s view that the prospects for disarmament were not entirely discouraging. The results obtained at Geneva by the Conference of Experts to Study the Possibility of Detecting Violations of a Possible Agreement on the Suspension of Nuclear Tests were a positive contribution to the solution of the disarmament problem; they gave the United Nations an incentive to convert those efforts into definitive gains.

7. He was convinced that all the nations of the world would hail the conclusion of an agreement which would permit the abandonment of atomic and hydrogen weapons tests. But in view of the conference which was to meet in Geneva from 31 October 1958 onwards to consider the problem of the discontinuance of nuclear weapons tests and the establishment of a system of international control based on the report of the Conference of Experts (A/3897), he was surprised that the Soviet delegation had seen fit to submit a draft resolution on the immediate and unconditional discontinuance of nuclear tests (A/C.1/L.203), especially as the text of that draft made not the slightest reference to the forthcoming Geneva conference. The Brazilian delegation wondered what guarantee such a recommendation could offer and of what use it could be if it were not linked with a suitable system of international control. Moreover, it was not sufficient to recommend, as the Soviet draft did, that States should enter into negotiations in an indeterminate future on an agreement to discontinue tests.

8. The draft resolution submitted by the Indian delegation (A/C.1/L.202) was an improvement on the Soviet draft in that it specifically mentioned the conference which was to take place in Geneva on 31 October 1958. However, operative paragraph 1 of that draft did not appear to be satisfactory because it did not link the promise to discontinue nuclear weapons tests with the institution of an effective system of international control.

9. Those were some of the reasons why the Brazilian delegation had preferred to support the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205). In addition to the recommendation concerning the suspension of nuclear tests, that text expressed the wish that the initiatives recently undertaken should continue with a view to achieving a balanced and effectively controlled world-wide system of disarmament.

10. The General Assembly could either adopt a vague recommendation calling upon the great Powers immediately to suspend their nuclear tests but without making that request contingent on the establishment of the indispensable control system, or it could refer the question to the conference which was to meet on 31 October 1958, on the desirability of which the "atomic Powers" were fully agreed and during which all the political aspects of the question were to be discussed. The first alternative would be acceptable only if it could be considered that the present mistrust in the world had been removed, and nobody could sincerely claim that to be the case. For that reason, the Brazilian delegation wholeheartedly hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the seventeen-Power draft resolution.

11. Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom) recalled that the statement made on 4 November 1957 during the twelfth session (585th meeting), by Mr. Kuznetsov, the Soviet Union representative, in which he had described as an ultimatum the proposals of the Western Powers which formed the basis of the resolution adopted later by the First Committee, had itself been an ultimatum: Mr. Kuznetsov had on that occasion declared the Soviet Government's intention to boycott further discussion in the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee if the Assembly were to endorse the Western proposals. It seemed that at the 945th meeting Mr. Zorin had now confronted the First Committee with another ultimatum. He had said, in effect, that if the United Kingdom and the United States did not accept the arbitrary procedure demanded by the Soviet Union for dealing with the problem of nuclear weapons tests, the Soviet Union would forthwith conduct another large series of nuclear tests. The agreements on disarmament so ardently desired by the peoples of the world would not be reached by methods such as those. He hoped, however, that that was not the Soviet Government's last word on the subject.

12. He also hoped that he was not wrong in sharing the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his memorandum that, taken as a whole, the disarmament picture was not altogether discouraging (A/3936, para. 2). Admittedly, no actual agreement had been reached on disarmament, but, on the other hand, a new opportunity had emerged with respect to certain aspects of the problem, so that there was now hope of a limited agreement, given general agreement on both sides. But for that new opportunity, the prospect would have been discouraging indeed.

13. At its twelfth session the General Assembly had adopted resolution 1148 (XII), leaving the way open to further negotiation within the United Nations framework, and canvassing the work of the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission and, at the same session, enlarging the membership of the Disarmament Commission (resolution 1150 (XII)) to meet the wishes of the USSR and many other Member States. But there had been no further negotiation and the Disarmament Commission had not even been able to meet. However, although the past should be taken into consideration, it was still more important to look to the future. As the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, had said in the general debate (758th meeting), it was necessary to deal with the facts as they were, and retribution was not a policy. The United Kingdom policy was to continue to seek an agreement, and the United Kingdom had always recognized that there could be no effective agreement without the full and free participation of the Soviet Union.

14. Having found that progress was, for the time being, impossible within the United Nations, the United Kingdom had looked for ways of making progress outside the Organization. Members would recall the unsuccessful attempt to arrange a summit conference of the great Powers and, later, the invitation sent to the Soviet Government by the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States to appoint scientific experts to study the possibility of detecting violations of an agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests. That invitation, which had been delivered after the decision by the Government of the Soviet Union on 31 March 1958 to discontinue its nuclear weapons tests, had resulted in the Conference of Experts held at Geneva in July and August 1958. That Conference had come to the conclusion that it was technically feasible to establish an effective control system to detect violations of an agreement on the world-wide
suspension of nuclear weapons tests, with certain reservations.

15. Mr. Zorin had suggested that perhaps the United Kingdom Government did not accept the conclusions of the Conference. On the contrary, it was precisely because it welcomed them that the United Kingdom Government had issued its statement of 22 August 1958 (A/3956/Rev.1). That statement contained the sentence: "It is now established that effective international control over a suspension of nuclear weapons tests is technically possible." The United Kingdom further declared its readiness to enter into negotiations with other Governments which had tested nuclear weapons, with a view to concluding an agreement for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests under international control. Those negotiations were due to begin at Geneva on 31 October 1958. As an earnest of its desire to reach agreement in these negotiations, the United Kingdom Government had also announced on 22 August that it would discontinue nuclear test explosions for a period of one year from 31 October 1958, if the negotiations began on that date and if the Soviet Government would also discontinue testing for the same period. The United Kingdom Government had further indicated that it would refrain from testing for further successive one-year periods provided that the Soviet Government would do the same and provided that satisfactory progress was being made towards the installation of effective international controls over the suspension of nuclear weapons tests and towards the adoption and execution of measures of real disarmament. There was the further prospect of the meeting of qualified persons to be held at Geneva on 10 November 1958 to discuss the technical aspects of measures of inspection against the possibility of surprise attack.

16. Those developments had done much to compensate for the deadlock in the United Nations and had made the past year on balance more encouraging than the previous ones.

17. The sponsors of the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205) believed that the best way for the General Assembly to serve the common cause was by giving encouragement to the coming negotiations and by urging all parties to "make every effort to reach early agreement on the suspension of nuclear weapons tests under effective international control". That was the substance of the operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution.

18. The USSR delegation, on the other hand, was urging the Assembly to take a decision on the subject matter of the Geneva negotiations before those negotiations had even taken place. In a matter of such vital importance for national and world security, enduring arrangements could hardly be arrived at in that way. A solution must be the result of agreement, and agreement should be the result of negotiation and free discussion. It would be unrealistic to try to commit the "nuclear Powers" to a particular course before they had had full opportunity for negotiation among themselves. Likewise, the three "nuclear Powers" could not commit other Powers in their absence. If the three could reach agreement, it was the United Kingdom Government's hope that other States could be associated with it as quickly as might be practicable. It was therefore essential for the three Powers conducting tests to reach preliminary agreement among themselves.

19. Unlike the Government of the Soviet Union, which seemed to regard the forthcoming conference as little more than a formality in which no substantial negotiations would be required, the United Kingdom Government regarded the Geneva negotiations as extremely important, and indeed, crucial. The Conference of Experts had agreed on the technical feasibility of controls, but agreement had yet to be reached on their practical application on the political structure of a control organization. The United Kingdom Government believed that if an effective control system could be agreed upon and established, the suspension of tests could continue indefinitely, provided that there was also satisfactory progress regarding the adoption and execution of measures of real disarmament. The ultimate aim of the United Kingdom was, of course, the final cessation of all nuclear weapons tests, because that was part of its constant aim of comprehensive disarmament. It wanted the cessation of tests with real disarmament. But the Soviet Union objected to the United Kingdom's desire to link the continued suspension and final cessation of tests with real disarmament. It wanted the problem of tests settled in isolation.

20. The fundamental question was not simply disarmament, but the question of peace and security and the right of all peoples to live in freedom and without fear. Disarmament was only valuable in so far as it contributed to that end. The suspension or cessation of nuclear weapons tests was not in itself disarmament, since it would leave a number of Powers free to go on amassing nuclear weapons as they pleased. In itself, therefore, it could do little to ensure greater peace and security. Suspension might, however, contribute to that end by increasing confidence and helping to bring about real disarmament. That had always been the Soviet contention, as was shown by certain remarks made in the debate at the twelfth session by the Soviet Foreign Minister (807th meeting).

21. The success of the Geneva Conference of Experts had now made it possible to put suspension of nuclear weapons tests to the trial and to see whether in fact disarmament could be reached in that way. The Soviet Government need not fear that the United Kingdom would not give the suspension of tests a fair trial. In that connexion he referred again to the passage in the United Kingdom Government's statement of 22 August 1958 containing the offer to refrain from nuclear tests for "further successive periods of one year, provided that the Soviet Union will do the same and that satisfactory progress has been made towards the installation of an effective system of international control over the suspension of nuclear tests and towards the adoption and execution of measures of real disarmament" (A/3956/Rev.1, para. 5). The United Kingdom Government would interpret the words "satisfactory progress" with due regard to what was reasonably and practically possible, given the time factor and the difficulties of the disarmament problem.

22. In the long run, the only real safeguard of peace and security would be true disarmament, meaning the actual reduction of both nuclear and conventional armaments, together with effective measures of inspection and control. If that was not achieved, the possibility must be retained of preserving peace and security by other means, i.e., by means of the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons. No commitment could be
undertaken at present as to the final and permanent cessation of nuclear weapons tests without any assurance of real disarmament, since there was no certainty that in those circumstances peace and security could be maintained. That did not mean that the Western Powers did not want disarmament.

23. The Soviet position was really just the same, as was clear from the statement made on 12 July 1958 at Moscow by Mr. Krushchëv, to the effect that the Soviet Union would never renounce its right to ensure its own security. Indeed, the very principle had been invoked by the representative of the USSR to justify the recent resumption of Soviet nuclear weapons tests. The Western Powers did not deny the Soviet Union the right to ensure its own security; they only asked that their right to do so should be recognized also.

24. With regard to the offer by the United States and the United Kingdom Governments to suspend their nuclear weapons tests for one year from 31 October 1958, the Soviet Government was now threatening to go ahead with another large series of tests unless the Western Powers agreed to the Soviet proposals. That was the ultimatum to which he had referred earlier. He hoped the Soviet Government would reconsider its position and do nothing to prevent a suspension of tests as from 31 October. The Soviet Government was complaining that the United States and the United Kingdom had continued their tests after the Soviet announcement of 31 March 1958. But it must be remembered that during the two months immediately before that announcement the Soviet Government had itself carried out a very large series of tests. The Soviet Government also complained that the United Kingdom had announced further tests in its statement of 22 August 1958. That had been the completion of the planned 1957 series, and surely it was better to have announced the tests openly and honestly than to have kept them quiet. At all events, the United Kingdom Government’s offer of an initial one-year suspension of tests still held good, despite the recent resumption of Soviet tests. Once the negotiations at Geneva had begun as planned, if the Soviet Government did not continue testing after that date, the United Kingdom tests would stop anyhow for one year, and if satisfactory progress was made in the matters already specified, there was no reason why the suspension should not go on indefinitely. If, as the United Kingdom delegation hoped, the Geneva negotiations succeeded and led to an agreement for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests under international control, and if that agreement proved to be an effective step towards later measures of real disarmament, there was no reason why the Powers concerned should ever find it necessary to resume their testing of nuclear weapons. The realization of that hope now depended on the Soviet Union.

25. With regard to section II of the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205), the question of surprise attack was a complex and only partially explored subject. He hoped that the Geneva conference scheduled to begin on 10 November 1958 would be a fact-finding exercise of a purely technical kind, and would furnish the basis for political negotiation and agreement later on. As with the suspension of nuclear weapons tests, the measures of inspection against surprise attack did not constitute disarmament in themselves, but an effective inspection system could contribute immense-

ly to reducing the fears and tensions which had made progress in disarmament so difficult.

26. Section III of the draft resolution looked towards the goal of real disarmament and expressed determination that the opportunities now offered should be used to pursue that aim. One such opportunity was the technical approach already developed with regard to the question of the suspension of tests and, it was hoped, that of surprise attack. It must however be emphasized that the technical approach could never be a substitute for political negotiation and political agreement.

27. With regard to the questions dealt with in section IV, the United Kingdom welcomed the statement on that subject made by the Secretary-General in his memorandum (A/3936). It was not possible to say in advance what precise arrangements might be desirable for associating the United Nations with any control or inspection systems; that would depend on how the negotiations turned out. He felt bound, however, to reaffirm the principle that the over-all responsibility for disarmament lay with the United Nations. As soon as possible, therefore, the substantive discussion of disarmament should be brought back within the United Nations framework.

28. The United Nations at the current session had a great opportunity to reach an agreement of substance concerning disarmament. The right use of that opportunity could create other opportunities and open the way to real and far-reaching progress at last. The Assembly could seize the opportunity by supporting the seventeen-Power draft resolution, which proposed advancing by negotiation rather than stampeding into hasty and unrealistic action such as that proposed by the Soviet Union draft resolution.

29. Mr. BELAUDE (Peru) observed that it was the first time since 1951 that the First Committee had considered the question of disarmament without having before it a report of the Disarmament Commission. It might be said that it was the first time the United Nations had not complied with certain Articles of the Charter, in particular Article 26, the provisions of which he recalled.

30. However, although the Disarmament Commission had been paralysed, there had been some activity outside the Organization and the United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was to be congratulated on having proposed a meeting of experts at Geneva to study the possibility of detecting violations of a possible agreement on the suspension of nuclear tests. The success of that Conference was a decisive step forward in the history of disarmament, since political negotiations were to follow. Another result was that technical and political talks had been planned in other fields, in regard to the possibility of avoiding surprise attack, for instance.

31. It might therefore be said that there had been a providential division of labour in the field of disarmament, whereas, it had been mistakenly thought at first that the juridical aspect, the scientific aspect and the political aspect of the problem could all be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission. That new departure was therefore to be welcomed, but it should be kept in mind that the First Committee was called upon to establish, within the United Nations, the necessary machinery either to exercise the powers conferred on the General Assembly by Article 11 of the Charter or
to fulfill the obligations and exercise the powers which were the prerogative of the Security Council under Article 26. The agreement reached at Paris in 1951 by the members of Sub-Committee 18 of the First Committee, of which the representative of Mexico had given a detailed account at the 94th meeting, provided a useful procedure. It had unfortunately not been possible for that procedure to function in 1958, for obvious reasons. There were two possible ways out of the difficulty: to set up a small committee which would serve as a liaison between the "nuclear Powers", which now held conflicting views, or to entrust the Secretary-General with the very important mission of remaining in permanent contact with those Powers and available to facilitate negotiations between them.

32. Of course, the question of disarmament could not be solved by ultimatums, however augury the body that issued them. The General Assembly represented the world’s conscience but it was not entitled to tell the great Powers that they must follow any particular course. The question of disarmament was obviously linked to problems of national security and questions of internal policy. It was not even advisable for the General Assembly to select the members of the proposed committee, for the performance of good offices must be entrusted to persons who enjoyed the complete confidence of the parties to the negotiations. It was therefore the Powers signatories of the Warsaw Treaty and the Powers members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that should, if they saw fit to do so, select a committee, or an individual or group of individuals.

33. As the Peruvian delegation had already stated on several occasions, the word "prohibition" was a mere mockery for mankind if it was not accompanied by some form of control. It was not a magic word, and without control it had no value. He recalled the proposal made by the Peruvian delegation in the Disarmament Commission in 1956 regarding the reduction of conventional armaments. The Soviet Union had proposed the establishment of a body to supervise the agreed reductions. The Peruvian delegation had then proposed that the control body should also be given the power to undertake negotiations with a view to reducing progressively the production of nuclear weapons and gradually converting arms stockpiles into energy for peaceful uses, or having them simply destroyed.1 The resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its twelfth session (resolution 1148 (XII)) took account of the Peruvian delegation’s proposal. It was unfortunate that that resolution had remained a dead letter.

34. If it was not possible to organize a perfect international control system, he wondered whether the production of nuclear weapons might not be gradually reduced, on a reciprocal basis, taking into account the interests involved and being careful not to give any one of the interested Powers the advantage it might gain if the system worked badly. Such a measure might lead subsequently to the gradual destruction of the arms already manufactured. However, the Peruvian delegation realized that, in order to destroy stockpiles of weapons, it was necessary to work out techniques in advance and therefore to convene a meeting of experts. The latter, with the experience acquired at such meetings as the forthcoming one on the prevention of surprise attack, might start negotiations.

35. With regard to the suspension of nuclear weapons tests, it must be recognized that, in view of the possible dangers of radiation for the human race, there was every inducement to seek an urgent and radical solution, but such solutions were not always the most judicious. He recalled that, on the basis of scientific evidence that the amount of radiation which might be absorbed without danger by the human organism was unknown, His Holiness Pope Pius XII had recommended in a message that every way—not one way only—of achieving the suspension of nuclear weapons tests should be studied. The Pope had not recommended a radical and over-simplified formula; what he had recommended was a study of how to suspend testing.

36. It would be dangerous to establish an artificial scale of values and allow mankind to believe that, if testing of nuclear weapons was suspended, the problem of disarmament would be completely solved. That was why the cessation of tests should be linked with the establishment of a disarmament organization on a juridical basis and with a genuine acceptance of control. Control was possible, as the experts who had met at Geneva stated in their report (A/3897).

37. He expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would not adopt an intransigent attitude and that, out of concern to protect mankind from the peril of radiation, it would accept provisional measures and support the seventeen-Power proposal (A/C.1/L.205). There could not be much doubt that the USSR Government was motivated by a sincere desire for peace. Even if its memorandum (A/3929) was intended for propaganda purposes, no exception could be taken to that since the propaganda was for peace. From the human point of view, he interpreted it as a tribute to the conscience of mankind.

38. Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) remarked that, although the United Kingdom Government had welcomed the decisions of the Geneva Conference of Experts, it had never indicated whether it accepted the control system proposed at that Conference. He would like to state once again that his Government accepted the control system worked out by the experts at Geneva. Neither the United States nor the United Kingdom had so far stated that they supported it; and yet the decision of the Conference of Experts had been communicated to all States and the experts had recommended it to the attention of their Governments.

39. The United Kingdom representative accused the Soviet Union of trying, in its draft resolution (A/C.1/L.203), to impose a solution on the Powers which were to meet in Geneva on 31 October 1958. However, a mere perusal of the draft resolution was enough to show that that was not the case: if the Assembly adopted it, it would only be expressing an opinion and inviting States to take specific action. What point would there be in making such a recommendation after the conference? Furthermore, the seventeen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.205), supported by the representative of the United Kingdom, also requested the Powers meeting at Geneva to adopt a specific solution immediately, as was clear from operative paragraph 1.

40. The question was not, therefore, whether the Assembly should or should not adopt a recommendation, but to agree on what the recommendation should contain. The seventeen Powers proposed a temporary
suspension of testing, whereas the Soviet Union proposed that such tests should be stopped for good. There were, therefore, two proposed solutions: one was, from the Soviet point of view, unsatisfactory, while the other was a radical solution which was in the interest of the peoples of the world. The Soviet proposal in no way excluded the possibility of subsequent negotiation; its purpose was to set the General Assembly’s views before the participants at the forthcoming Geneva conference.

41. The United Kingdom representative had called the Soviet proposals an ultimatum. But were the Western Powers not issuing an ultimatum when they refused to accept a measure of partial disarmament without other measures of a complementary nature being taken? Their position was similar to that of the three Western Powers in the Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission in 1957. The London talks had failed largely because the Western Powers had imposed two prior conditions to the cessation of test explosions: the establishment of a control system and the opening of negotiations concerning the discontinuance of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. Today, there were even more conditions: control, progress in the atomic field of disarmament, progress with regard to conventional weapons, progress in connexion with the prevention of surprise attack, and so on. It was therefore untrue to say that the position of the Western Powers had become less rigid.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.