



FIRST COMMITTEE
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at 11 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 32ND MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GBEHO (Ghana)

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DISARMAMENT ITEMS

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A draft resolution was introduced by:

Mr. Marinescu (Romania) - A/C.1/37/L.16

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The meeting was called to order at 11.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 39 TO 57, 133, 136, 138 AND 139 (continued)

Mr. SOULIOTIS (Greece) (interpretation from French): First, may I express to the Soviet delegation my delegation's condolences on the death of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. President Brezhnev devoted his entire career to the cause of détente and made tireless efforts to achieve that aim. As a major statesman and leader of his country, his personality has left its mark on the world for the last two decades and his loss is felt by the entire world.

My delegation would like to express its views on item 133 (a) of our agenda. In the small hours of 1 July 1978, a few moments after the adoption of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Greek delegation made the following statement

"So that it can be reflected in the record my delegation would like to clarify its position as far as concerns the negotiating body established in paragraph 120 of the Final Document. That paragraph contains the statement that:

'... the membership of the Committee on Disarmament will be reviewed at regular intervals ...'

"Our interpretation of that wording is that generally accepted for the principal organs of the United Nations. Accordingly, the 'regular intervals' referred to in that paragraph cannot be more than three-year intervals, even while taking into account the important role that the nuclear countries are called upon to play.

"It is quite natural that all interested countries, Greece among them, should have an opportunity to participate at a subsequent stage in that negotiating body, it being understood that disarmament and international security are a cause common to all Members of our Organization without any distinction." (A/S-10/PV.27, pp. 166-167)

(Mr. Souliotis, Greece)

In line with that approach which we took in 1978, my delegation subsequently sponsored or supported various resolutions of the General Assembly on the question of reviewing the membership of the Committee on Disarmament, as we did this year in relation to draft resolution A/C.1/37/L.9, introduced by the Norwegian delegation. That approach has been prompted by the desire of my delegation to ensure that the international community has a single multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations which is capable of effectively discharging its mandate. Such a forum should obviously be of limited size, because the larger it is the more cumbersome it becomes, and consequently it cannot function effectively. Therefore, if as the Final Document provides, we proceed at regular intervals to expand the Committee it will soon become, from the numerical point of view, a negotiating body in the image of the General Assembly.

Four years have elapsed since 1978 and, for reasons of which we are all aware, the Geneva Committee has been unable to find a solution to the problem of how to review its composition. A few days ago, in our statement in the general debate in this Committee, we recalled that the Greek Government earnestly desired that the Committee on Disarmament should reach a conclusion satisfactory to all States on the extremely complex problem of its expansion. We are aware of the seriousness of this problem but at the same time we are convinced that all States should be involved in one way or another in the work of this single multilateral negotiating body, in keeping with the principle that disarmament concerns everyone.

(Mr. Souliotis, Greece)

Hence we reiterate with equal force that the Disarmament Committee is not, nor should it be, a closed club, and that there cannot be two categories of States: privileged and non-privileged, first-class and second-class.

Furthermore, paragraph 28 of the Final Document, whose merit was solemnly reaffirmed a few months ago, expressly stipulated that all States have the right to participate on an equal footing in the multilateral disarmament negotiations.

The logical corollary is that every State has a legitimate right to participate in the work of the Disarmament Committee - an irrefutable and inalienable right of every State in the disarmament field and one which, therefore, can in no wise be amended or tampered with for any reason whatsoever.

That is why it is our earnest hope that the Committee on disarmament will, next year, be in a position to take a decision on its membership. Such a decision should not affect either the nature of that body as a negotiating instrument or the principle of equality among States - or, for that matter, their right to participate in disarmament negotiations.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): At yesterday's meeting of the General Assembly the delegation of Romania expressed its deep sorrow over the passing of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev. We knew full well the eminent qualities of President Brezhnev, as we know the particularly important role he played for nearly two decades as leader of the Soviet Party and State, his contribution to promoting a policy of peaceful coexistence, détente and co-operation, security and peace in Europe and throughout the world, as well as his concern over fulfilling the vital aspirations of peoples to halt the arms race, proceed to disarmament and thereby prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

The delegation of the People's Republic of Romania wishes once again to express to the delegations of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic its deep sorrow over their great loss as a result of the passing of President Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev.

In conformity with resolution 35/141 of 12 December 1980 the Secretary-General of the United Nations at this session submitted an updated version of the report on the Economic and Social Consequences of the Arms Race and of Military Expenditures, prepared with the assistance of qualified consultants from 12 countries.

Our delegation devoted one of its statements to that document during the general debate in this Committee on the disarmament items. On that occasion we emphasized the topicality of that report and the value of its analysis and conclusions. That document, which deals comprehensively with the phenomenon of the arms race and military expenditures, as well as with their effects on the economic and social life of peoples, will certainly be a reference document in the ever-expanding efforts within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign at keeping Governments as well as international public opinion informed.

With reference to that report, the Romanian delegation, together with those of Bangladesh, Bahamas, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ecuador, Indonesia, Ireland, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Peru, Rwanda, Sweden, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zaire, prepared the draft resolution in document A/C.1/37/L.16, which it is my honour to introduce.

The preambular part recalls the political thinking behind the draft, which is also reflected in the main conclusions of the report. Thus we reaffirm deep concern over the continued increase in military expenditures, the economic and social consequences of the military use of immense material and human resources, as well as the need for all Governments and peoples to be informed and to understand fully the situation in that field.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

The operative part of the draft resolution contains provisions similar to those embodied in other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in connection with reports and studies that have been prepared on various disarmament topics. Thus we welcome with satisfaction the updated report and express thanks to the Secretary-General and to the expert consultants, as well as to the Governments and international organizations that co-operated in its preparation.

Operative paragraph 3 of the draft recommends that the conclusions of the updated report should be brought to the attention of public opinion and also taken into account in future actions by the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

One important provision of the draft is that contained in operative paragraph 4, which requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements for the reproduction of the report as a United Nations publication and to give it publicity in the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign. To the same end it recommends to all Governments that they ensure the widest possible distribution of the report, including, where appropriate, its translation into the respective national languages.

It invites the specialized agencies of the United Nations, as well as intergovernmental, national and non-governmental organizations, to use their facilities to make the report widely known.

Finally, the draft provides that the item entitled "Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security" should be kept under review by the General Assembly and, as such, be included on the provisional agenda of the fortieth session.

The draft resolution which it is my honour to introduce is the product of broad consultations, and its preparation was guided by the wish to have the final text command the general approval necessary for its adoption by consensus. It is our sincere conviction that by implementing the measures provided for in this draft resolution the United Nations will be making an important contribution to the overall effort to make better known and understood the phenomenon of the arms race and military expenditures, as well as their harmful economic, social and political consequences. That is a prerequisite for embarking upon genuine disarmament negotiations without delay.

Mr. MBAI (Kenya): I wish to associate my delegation with the other representatives who have spoken in this Committee about the death of a great leader of the Soviet Union, Mr. Leonid Brezhnev. Indeed, it was with great shock that we learned of the untimely death of the Soviet Head of State, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Supreme Commander of the Soviet Forces. Africa has benefited tremendously from the late President Brezhnev's leadership and from his consistent identification with African aspirations and its liberation struggle against colonialism which is of profound historical significance to our continent. It is our prayer that the people of the Soviet Union will know that the entire African community is with them in this hour of their great loss.

As the current Chairman of the African Group I wish once again to convey through you, Mr. Chairman, to the USSR delegation our deep heart-felt condolences on this sad occasion.

As representatives are well aware, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/37/L.10 on agenda item 133, dated 4 November 1982, of which my delegation is one of the sponsors, has been introduced by the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Ijewere. The draft addresses the question of the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament which, it will be recalled, was discussed during the twelfth special session under the broad item of the World Disarmament Campaign. During the same session the Assembly attached great importance to the mobilization of public opinion in favour of disarmament. My delegation believes that this objective is well served by the disarmament fellowship programme from which my country has already benefited.

In the consensus text adopted by the twelfth special session on the disarmament fellowship programme, the Secretary-General was requested

"... to submit ... the financial implications of awarding 25 fellowships ... taking into account the ... staffing requirements ... of the programme". (A/S-12/32, annex IV, para. 3 (g))

(Mr. Mbai, Kenya)

My delegation has noted the steady increase in the programme's activities since its inception in 1979, as shown by the Secretary-General in the various programme elements enumerated in document A/S-12/8 and Corr.1.

My delegation therefore believes that there is a clear need for the programme to be managed at a high level to meet the requirements of the increased activities and its expanded structure. We therefore support this draft resolution.

Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): My delegation has asked to be allowed to speak in connection with draft resolution A/C.1/37/L.10, entitled "United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament".

My delegation can attest to the fact that since its inception the Programme has contributed in no small measure to our greater understanding of this all-important and sensitive issue of disarmament. It has also benefited in its comprehension of the intricate issues entailed in the fields of disarmament and international security and of disarmament and economic development - matters on which the representative of Sweden so ably and eloquently spoke here yesterday.

It is also a matter of record that the programme of fellowships on disarmament contributed in no small measure to the work of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In this connection, my delegation would like to express its heartfelt appreciation to the Governments of the German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden for inviting this year's disarmament fellows to study selected disarmament issues which, I am sure, has helped to enhance our comprehension of the matters involved. We hope that other countries will find it possible in the future to extend similar support to the programme.

My delegation would also like to express our gratitude to the Assistant Secretary-General who co-ordinated the programme and for the keen interest that he maintained throughout the fellowship.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

In the consensus text adopted by the second special session devoted to disarmament, in particular on fellowships, the Secretary-General was requested "... to submit ... the financial implications of awarding 25 fellowships ... taking into account the ... staffing requirements ... of the programme". (Ibid.)

My delegation has noted the steady increase in the programme's activities since its inception in 1979, as shown in the Secretary-General's report, particularly in A/S-12/8 and Corr.1. My delegation therefore believes there is a clear need for the programme to be continued and managed at a high level to meet the increased demands and activities and to expand the programme's structure.

Finally, we hope that bearing that in mind the Committee will find it possible to lend its support to the programme and, if necessary, to increase its resources.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)(interpretation from Russian): On behalf of the Soviet delegation, I wish to express our gratitude to those delegations which at today's meeting expressed their condolences to us on the passing of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.