

CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/PV.690
24 February 1976
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND NINETEETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 24 February 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. W.H. Barton

(Canada)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Argentina:

Mr. S.N. MARTINEZ

Brazil:

Mr. I.M.A. MASTROGIOVANNI

Bulgaria:

Mr. R. NIKOLOV

Mr. B. GRINBERG

Burma:

U-THA TUN

Canada:

Mr. W.H. BARTON

Mr. J.T. SIMARD

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. M. RUZEK

Mr. V. SOJAK

Egypt:

Mr. A.E. KHAIRAT

Ethiopia:

Mr. G. DEMISSIE

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER

Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. G.J. SCHLAICH

Mr. J. BAUCH

Mr. K. HANNESSCHLAGER

Hungary:

Mr. M. DOMOKOS

Mr. R. TOTTH

Mr. I. KÖRMENDY

India:

Mr. B.C. MISHRA

Mr. P.K. GUPTA

Iran:

Mr. M. FARTASH

Mr. H. AMERI

Miss C. TAHMASSEB

Mr. D. CHILATY

Italy:

Mr. N. DI BERNARDO

Mr. A. BIZZARINI

Japan:

Mr. M. OGISO

Mr. T. SAWAI

Mexico:

Mr. M. MARIN

Mr. S. CAMPOS-ICARDO

Miss A. CABRERA

Mr. M.A. CACERES

Mongolia:

Mr. M. DUGERSUREN

Mr. L. BAYARTE

Morocco:

Mr. A. SKALLI

Mr. S.M. RAHHALI

Netherlands:

Mr. A.J. MEERBURG

Nigeria:

Mr. O. ALO

Mr. G.S. AKUNWAFOR

Mr. S.T. ADAMU

Pakistan:

Mr. I. BUKHARI

Peru:

Mr. L. CHÁVEZ-GODOY

Mr. G. CHAUNY

Poland:

Mr. E. WYZNER

Mr. A. OLSZOWKA

Mr. H. PAC

Mr. A. CZERKAWSKI

Romania:

Mr. C. ENE

Mr. V. TUDOR

Mr. M. MANEA

Mr. M. ROSIANU

Sweden:

Mr. G. HAMILTON

Mr. U. REINIUS

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
 Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN
 Mr. N.V. PESTEREV
 Mr. I.P. GLAZKOV
 Mr. A.M. VAVILOV
 Mr. E.K. POTIARKIN

United Kingdom:

Mr. M.E. ALLEN
 Mr. C.H.V. McCOLL
 Mr. P. TOWLE

United States of America:

Mr. J. MARTIN
 Mr. D.P. BLACK
 Mr. W. GRAYSON
 Mr. C. GRIP
 Mr. G. HARLOW
 Mr. D. THOMPSON

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. K. LUKABU

Special Representative of
the Secretary-General:

Mr. RISTO HYVÄRINEN

Alternate Representative of
the Secretary-General:

Mr. A. CORRADINI

Communiqué of the meeting

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 690th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador W.H. Barton, representative of Canada.

A statement was made by the representative of Iran.

The delegation of Sweden submitted "Comments on draft convention on the 'Prohibition of Military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques' (CCD/471, CCD/472) made in a statement by Mrs. Inga Thorsson in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, 14 November, 1975" (CCD/479).

The following document was also submitted: "Letter dated 20 February 1976 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General transmitting the text of a statement on environmental modification made by the Australian representative in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on 24 November 1975" (CCD/480).

The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 26 February 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

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Mr. FARTASH (Iran): As my delegation resumes its seat in this now familiar chamber, I should like in the first place to extend our heartiest welcome to the distinguished representatives who are heading their delegations for the first time, namely, Ambassador U Thet Tun of Burma, Ambassador Ruzek of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Ogiso of Japan, and Ambassador Arias-Schreiber of Peru. We are fortunate also to have with us Ambassador Hyvärinen, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose counsel will surely be of great value to the Committee.

We have returned with renewed determination to our Geneva Conference for another year of meetings which hopefully will enable us to bring to fruition some of the preparatory work done during 1975. As far as the delegation of Iran is concerned, we will certainly contribute to the best of our ability, and we firmly intend to help achieve some tangible progress on the items before us.

Among our documents there is the record of the General Assembly's disarmament discussion ranging widely over an elongated agenda. Looking closely at the debate which engaged the First Committee of the world body, and at the guidelines which it has passed on to our Committee, we do not see a very encouraging picture. The debate itself clearly reflected general dissatisfaction with the state of disarmament negotiations, but there was little agreement on the constructive suggestions which might help us advance towards our objectives. The record number of resolutions adopted indicated an ever-mounting concern on the part of most countries over this vital question. Yet one might wonder whether the greater volume of resolutions will necessarily spell greater success for our disarmament discussions, whether it will be possible in this particular case to equate the quantity of issues with qualitative progress.

One feeling which seemed to pervade many speeches in the First Committee was a growing disillusionment with the CCD. Several suggestions were made advocating its reorganization or a reappraisal of its work to give greater impetus to our Committee. On the whole, it is probably a good idea to stop for a periodic review of one's work programme. In the case of the CCD, with so much still to be accomplished, an evaluation of past activities and a re-examination of the Committee's goals might especially be a useful exercise. In this, we agree fully with General Assembly resolution 3470 (XXX), on the Mid-Term Review of the Disarmament Decade, which was co-sponsored by eleven members of our Conference.

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Nevertheless, is it not perhaps more likely that the criticism directed against the CCD is in fact an expression of the deep disappointment so many of us feel with our inability so far to arrest the course of the nuclear arms race? One should ask whether it is really the CCD which is remiss in its task or whether the causes of our distressing situation lie elsewhere.

Certainly those of us who have sought diligently within this Committee to resolve the problems involved in certain arms-limitation measures know that mostly the real obstacle has been the reluctance of the States directly concerned to make the necessary political decisions. 1975 especially was a year of abundant technical discussions in this Committee and there has been no shortage of expert opinions and suggestions on the subjects on our agenda. However, the pace of our activities will probably not accelerate until the missing political will can somehow be inculcated.

Despite these inherent difficulties, the balance sheet of our two CCD sessions last year is not without merit. The intensity and depth of the discussions on certain selected items were in fact exemplary. Perhaps because it was the year of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, the questions relating to non-proliferation permeated our talks during the summer. I refer notably to the detailed consideration of nuclear-weapon-free zones and of the arms-control implications of peaceful nuclear explosions.

Ample commentary has already been made on the study of the Group of Experts on the Question of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. Appreciation of the study and the possibility that it could be useful to States seeking to establish denuclearized zones were clearly expressed by the General Assembly in its resolution on the subject which won overwhelming support. Attention also focused on the inability of the Group to agree on some fundamental aspects of such zones and we share the opinion of those who regret that it was not possible to elicit firmer commitments in principle on the question of security guarantees. On the whole, however, we believe that the Group conducted the most thorough discussion to date of the concept of denuclearized zones as a potential contribution to non-proliferation as well as a stepping stone to further disarmament measures. The various facets of the zonal idea have been well defined and the points of controversy stand out clearly.

The discussion of peaceful nuclear explosions was also advanced by the informal meetings with experts on the arms-control implications of these explosions. The dual role of PNEs in relation to both non-proliferation and the test ban issue was well delineated. Their relevance to the realization of a test cessation was highlighted and

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subsequently many delegations at the General Assembly stressed the importance of this aspect of PNEs. It is true that the CCD was unable to proceed to solve the questions which it had so pertinently raised. The establishment of the appropriate international body to service PNEs for non-nuclear-weapon States under article V of the NPT has been emphatically demanded and we hope that more direct action will now be taken towards this end. At the same time we have been assured by the United States and the Soviet Union that the results of their negotiation concerning PNEs within the context of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty will be discussed in this Committee. We trust that this opportunity will arise during the course of this year's sessions and that we will then be able to tackle the more complicated question of how to prevent the use of PNEs to circumvent a comprehensive test ban.

This is precisely the task which has been assigned to us by the General Assembly in its resolution 3484 A (XXX). We will, as requested, keep this question under review and in this endeavour we will certainly have frequent recourse to the papers and studies which were presented during our 1975 meetings.

At the end of our last CCD session our Committee welcomed with satisfaction the United States-Soviet draft convention to prohibit the use of the environment for military or other hostile purposes. We have already expressed our approval of this important additional step to thwart development of new methods of warfare. This session it will hopefully be possible to complete the necessary details on this draft and bring forth an agreed convention as we have been requested to do by the General Assembly. We have listened carefully to the remarks made on this subject by our distinguished colleagues from Sweden and Argentina as well as by other delegations at the General Assembly and we will have more specific comments of our own to make at a later date. For the moment, we would only stress that this draft agreement, even though negotiated bilaterally, can in part be attributed to the CCD. The undertaking to discuss steps towards preventing environmental warfare originated at the 1974 summit meeting. Later the proposal was referred to our Conference, where it was extensively studied with the assistance of experts. Dual negotiations thus proceeded simultaneously and the involvement of the CCD may have provided the additional incentive needed to reach agreement. Although we would have preferred results on more far-reaching measures of arms reduction, we welcome any successful effort to close the door to new weapons.

These considerations lead to the less satisfactory aspects of our work. The two most important items on our agenda, the prohibition of chemical weapons and the comprehensive test ban, have stagnated for some time.

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The excellent papers on chemical weapons submitted by Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Japan and Canada deserve to be supplemented by some efforts on the part of the United States and the Soviet Union. These two countries have promised to undertake a joint initiative to deal with chemical weapons. Again, we have been assured that contacts are being continued and we truly hope that they will come forth with some form of proposal. Simultaneously, in accordance with the wishes of the General Assembly that we give high priority to this item, we should continue our work on the basis of the draft agreements on the table.

The situation in respect to the question of a comprehensive test ban is also deplorable. And the greatest onus for the perennially stalemated situation of the test ban issue falls as before on the nuclear Powers. We must not, however, relent in our efforts. It is also up to the non-nuclear-weapon States to persist in seeking a compromise or interim solution, or at least to build up the pressure that can compel the nuclear Powers to reach agreement.

To come now to the lengthy debate of the First Committee at the thirtieth session of the General Assembly, it is quite apparent that there has been no lessening of interest in disarmament matters. But at the same time it is also apparent that there are increasing divergences of views on certain items, and markedly deeper division between nuclear and non-nuclear States. Of the six resolutions directed specifically to our Committee, only three were adopted by consensus. The others were voted with the abstention of at least one of the major nuclear-Power members of the CCD. Moreover, the debate reflected a general tendency towards caution on disarmament commitments. Increasingly, special political interests determine the voting of States; and, as the issues have multiplied, they have created new areas of dissension. This development is not necessarily an adverse one, as it brings perhaps greater political reality into the discussion. But we must guard against being overtaken by these special interests, for our efforts are in danger of being dissipated.

Perhaps greatest attention at the Assembly was devoted to the question of a comprehensive test ban which remains our item of highest priority. The two resolutions submitted by the Soviet Union and Australia projected new ideas which were advanced to achieve a breakthrough in this area. Both efforts were noteworthy. The one submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will, of course, receive due attention by the committee to be appointed by the President of the General Assembly.

The resolution introduced by Australia calls for a temporary suspension of all nuclear tests. This resolution received a large measure of support. However, all five nuclear-weapon States opposed it or abstained on it, a fact which hardly bodes well for

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the work we can hope to accomplish. Inevitably, an agreement to halt nuclear testing must -- in the first place -- apply to the nuclear-weapon States, without whose support no proposal stands much chance of success.

We have also before us the Soviet proposal for the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction. Any such attempt will have the support of my delegation. Thus we would welcome this measure as a potential restraint on the development of the dreaded weapons of mass destruction.

Having observed the anguish of the SALT negotiators as they struggle to include existing weapons systems in the Vladivostok agreement, one can imagine the difficulty that new weapons of mass destruction would pose for them.

If the development of even more terrible weapons systems is to be precluded, it will be necessary to identify, to the extent possible, such types of new weapons. It was particularly satisfying, therefore, that the Soviet Union amended its proposal to provide for expert consultations which could help translate this proposal into specific language.

The General Assembly adopted several other important items which, although not on the agenda of our Committee, are of direct concern to our work. My country was greatly encouraged by the nearly unanimous support received by the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. This resolution -- elaborated, as in 1974, with the delegation of Egypt -- pursues the idea of the original resolution 3263 (XXIX) which was in general favourably received by the States of the region. The resolution expressed our conviction that adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty by all the States involved would help to create the co-operative atmosphere needed for the establishment of a viable zone. Another step towards our goal would be accomplished, as stated in the recent resolution of the General Assembly, if all the States of the region would also declare their intention to refrain, on a reciprocal basis, from producing, acquiring, or in any other way possessing nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices, and from permitting the stationing of such weapons on their respective territories. We have emphasized repeatedly the hazards of introducing nuclear weapons into the Middle East area, but we realize fully the difficulties which may obstruct our efforts for such an accord. Nevertheless, we are heartened by our progress so far, and we are grateful for the backing of our co-sponsors as well as that of the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations.

In a spirit of co-operation, we have also extended our support to endeavours of a similar nature in other areas of the world, in Latin America, where the Tlatelolco Treaty already serves as an inspiration; in Africa, South Asia, and most recently in the South Pacific. The proposal on the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace

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represents a still broader concept than that of nuclear-free zones. It aspires to close an entire area to great-Power rivalry. The progress of the Ad Hoc Committee has been slow as it has pursued the delicate task of obtaining the co-operation of all the relevant nuclear and non-nuclear parties. There is now general agreement on the desirability of a conference of the littoral and hinterland States and the new resolution adopted by the General Assembly should encourage these countries to agree on the particulars of the Conference. Iran, as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee, will continue to assist in its attempts for the realization of this conference.

Another measure which my country supported at the Assembly was resolution 3464 (XXX), on napalm and other incendiary weapons. This item also deals with restricting or prohibiting the use of especially inhuman conventional weapons.

I have already mentioned the undercurrent of discontent with disarmament forums at the Assembly and the many resolutions which sought to ameliorate the organization of our work. In this connexion, my country joined in co-sponsoring a resolution to strengthen the Disarmament Division of the United Nations. It is evident that the Disarmament Division will need to have the proper staff. We also wish success to the Ad Hoc Committee which has been established, pursuant to another resolution, to carry out a basic review of the role of the United Nations in the disarmament field. We are confident that, under the able leadership of our esteemed colleague Mrs. Thorsson, the work of this Committee will be crowned with success.

The report this year of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference again projected the extreme intricacies of arranging such a conference. Since one purpose of the Conference would be to bring all important military Powers into the negotiations, the Committee faces the Herculean task of producing a consensus report and the price for the consensus is the snail's pace of the preparatory work. Discouraging as this effort has been, there is evidence of some increased understanding, and the two distinct approaches which were specified in the report may help to determine how the conference can eventually be organized.

After this tour d'horizon of disarmament-related items, the point I would like to stress is that we have not been unnerved by the expressions of disappointment with the results produced by our Committee. And, as regards the specific items assigned to us, we enter our second year of participation in the CCD with sober feelings as well as with determination to join our colleagues in constructive activity towards disarmament agreements.

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Before concluding my statement, I would also like to make a short comment on the question of the review of the institutional and procedural framework of the CCD -- the question we have agreed to deal with at the beginning of this session. In this regard, we have no doubt that some changes seem to be necessary and that the proposal for a comprehensive and thorough review of the procedures of the CCD is a commendable one. We believe, however, that the task of studying this matter and finally adopting new procedures should be tackled in such a way as not to lose sight of the very important fact that such changes or improvements can, at best, marginally affect the solution of the problems with which we are faced. The root of the malaise certainly lies elsewhere.

What we strongly disagree with, in this respect, is the impression already rather prevalent that we need to spend a great deal of the time of the Committee on procedural matters, at the risk of postponing or even ignoring substantive and pressing issues on our agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.