

# CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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21 August 1975  
ENGLISH

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FOURTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
on Thursday, 21 August 1975, at 3.00 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. M. Mihajlović

(Yugoslavia)

## PRESENT AT THE TABLE

<u>Argentina:</u>	Mr. S. N. MARTINEZ
<u>Brazil:</u>	Mr. G. A. MACIEL Mr. M. T. DA SILVA
<u>Bulgaria:</u>	Mr. B. GRINBERG
<u>Burma:</u>	U NYUNT MAUNG SHEIN
<u>Canada:</u>	Mr. W. H. BARTON Mr. P. E. McRAE
<u>Czechoslovakia:</u>	Mr. V. SOJÁK
<u>Egypt:</u>	Mr. S. ABOU-ALI
<u>Ethiopia:</u>	Mr. G. DEMISSIE
<u>German Democratic Republic:</u>	Mr. G. HERDER Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI Mr. B. RONSCH
<u>Germany, Federal Republic of:</u>	Mr. G. J. SCHLAICH Mr. J. BAUCH Mr. K. HANNESSCHLÄGER
<u>Hungary:</u>	Mr. D. MEISZTER Mr. I. KÖRMENDY
<u>India:</u>	Mr. B. C. MISHRA Mr. P. R. SOOD
<u>Iran:</u>	Mr. H. AMERI Miss C. TAHMASSEB
<u>Italy:</u>	Mr. N. DI BERNARDO Mr. G. VALDEVIT Mr. A. BIZZARINI

Japan:

Mr. M. NISIBORI

Mr. H. OKA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCÍA ROBLES

Mr. M. A. CÁCERES

Mongolia:

Mr. M. DUGERSUREN

Morocco:

Mr. S. RAHHALI

Netherlands:

Mr. A. J. MEERBURG

Nigeria:

Mr. B. A. CLARK

Mr. M. G. S. SAMAKI

Pakistan:

Mr. K. SALEEM

Peru:

Mr. L. CHÁVEZ-GODOY

Poland:

Mr. E. WYZNER

Mr. S. TOPA

Mr. A. CZERKAWSKI

Mr. H. PAC

Romania:

Mr. C. ENE

Mr. G. TINCA

Mr. D. APOSTOL

Sweden:

Mrs. I. THORSSON

Mr. G. HAMILTON

Mr. U. REINIUS

Mr. G. BERG

Mr. J. PRAWITZ

Union of Soviet Socialist  
Republics:

Mr. A. A. ROSHCIN

Mr. Y. K. NAZARKIN

Mr. N.V. PESTEREV

Mr. L. N. ANISIMOV

United Kingdom:

Mr. M. ALLEN  
Mr. J. G. TAYLOR  
Mr. A. G. P. WOOD

United States of America:

Mr. J. MARTIN, Jr.  
Mr. C. PELL  
Mr. W. GIVAN  
Mr. D. MAHLBERG  
Mr. W. GRAYSON  
Mr. R. EINHORN

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIĆ

Zaire:

Mr. C. M. KASASA  
Mr. LUKABU-K' HABOUJI

Acting Representative of the  
Secretary-General:

Mr. R. BJÖRNERSTEDT

Communiqué of the meeting

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 684th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the Chairmanship of Mr. M. Mihajlović, representative of Yugoslavia.

Statements were made by the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, India, Sweden, the German Democratic Republic, Canada, Poland and the Chairman.

The delegations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America each submitted a document (CCD/471 and CCD/472 respectively) entitled "Draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques".

The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 26 August 1975, at 10.30 a.m.

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Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian):

The Soviet Union, like the United States, is today submitting for the consideration of the Committee on Disarmament a draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. The purpose of submitting this document to the Committee is to pave the way for preventing the development -- and the introduction into the arsenals of States -- of a new, extremely dangerous weapon, namely the use of environmental modification as a means of warfare. The development of such a weapon and its use for military or other hostile purposes would mark a new and dangerous stage in the expansion of the ways and means of waging war. At this time, it is difficult to foresee all the consequences of a sequence of events in which techniques of influencing nature for military purposes might be used in practice and developed. There can be no doubt, however, that such a sequence of events would have extremely adverse effects for mankind.

In pursuance of its unremitting resolve to strengthen the peace and security of peoples and to bring about international application of extensive arms-control and disarmament measures, the Soviet Union submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session an item on the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well-being and health. In his statement at the General Assembly on 24 September 1974, A.A. Gromyko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, explained as follows the reasons for the introduction of that item:

"The achievements of scientific and technical progress have expanded the possibilities of influencing nature and the climate of the globe, and in a certain sense, of controlling the complex and powerful processes involved. Unfortunately, the latest discoveries can be used not only for creative, but also for military purposes, with extremely destructive consequences for mankind. These are not the conjectures of science fiction writers, but an actual threat that is assuming an ever more realistic shape. It is in the interests of all peoples to nip this threat in the bud."

(A/PV.2240, p.71)

In putting forward this problem for consideration by the General Assembly, the USSR proposed that an international convention should be concluded, outlawing

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

the military use of the environment. The Soviet Union submitted a draft convention on the subject to the Assembly.

The problem raised by the Soviet Union aroused great interest in the General Assembly. A large group of States supported the Soviet proposal on the need to prohibit action to influence the environment for military and other hostile purposes. The resolution adopted by the General Assembly recognizes that it is "necessary to adopt, through the conclusion of an appropriate international convention, effective measures to prohibit action to influence the environment and climate for military and other hostile purposes, which are incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well-being and health."

The General Assembly requested the Committee on Disarmament to proceed as soon as possible to achieving agreement on the text of such a convention and to submit a report on the results achieved for consideration by the General Assembly at its thirtieth session.

In pursuance of the task of preparing an international convention on this problem, the Soviet Union and the United States have held consultations, of which the Committee was informed by the representatives of the USSR and the United States. In the course of those consultations, preliminary agreement has been reached on a draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. In submitting the text of this draft for the consideration of the Committee on Disarmament, the Soviet delegation considers it necessary to explain some of its provisions.

The preamble notes that "military use of environmental modification techniques could have widespread, long-lasting or severe effects harmful to human welfare, but that the use of environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes could improve the interrelationship of man and nature and contribute to the preservation and improvement of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations". This provision of the preamble fully corresponds to the views expressed by experts at unofficial meetings of the Committee on Disarmament. The experts observed that modification of nature for military or any other hostile purposes would have consequences that would be extremely unfavourable to mankind.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

The preamble then emphasizes the desire of the parties to the convention "to limit the potential danger to mankind from means of warfare involving the use of environmental modification techniques".

Article I of the draft defines the basic obligations of the parties to the convention as follows: "... not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to another State Party."

Article I also contains a provision concerning the obligation of the parties to the convention not to assist, encourage or induce others to engage in the aforementioned kind of prohibited activities. The meaning of this article is quite obvious and hardly calls for any comment.

Article II defines the term "environmental modification techniques". This term refers to "any technique for changing -- through the deliberate manipulation of natural processes -- the dynamics, composition or structure of the Earth, including its biota, lithosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere, or of outer space, so as to cause such effects as earthquakes and tsunamis, an upset in the ecological balance of a region, or changes in weather patterns (clouds, precipitation, cyclones of various types and tornadic storms), in the state of the ozone layer or ionosphere, in climate patterns, or in ocean currents."

Article III states that the provisions of the convention shall not hinder the use of environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes or international economic and scientific co-operation in the utilization, preservation and improvement of the environment for peaceful purposes.

Article IV lays down the obligation of the parties to the convention, in accordance with their constitutional processes, to take any necessary measures to prohibit and prevent any activity in violation of the provisions of the convention.

Article V provides for consultations between the parties to the convention in solving any problems which may arise in the application of the convention. It also provides for the right of the parties to the convention to lodge a complaint with the Security Council in the event of a breach by any State party of the obligations it has assumed and it includes an obligation of the parties to co-operate in carrying out any investigation of the complaint by the Security Council. The article also establishes the obligation to provide assistance, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to a party to the convention which has been harmed as a result of its violation by any of its parties.



(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

The provisions of the draft convention relating to the proposal of amendments to the convention, its signature and its entry into force are similar to those contained inter alia in the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological Weapons.

The Convention is of unlimited duration.

The conclusion of an international convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques would be of great significance for the solution of an important international problem, that of preventing the use of geophysical and meteorological methods of warfare. The solution of this problem would represent a new, important step on the road to limitation of the arms race and to disarmament.

It would be a manifestation of goodwill and intelligence in the work of improving relations between States and of intensifying and broadening international détente.

The USSR delegation expresses the hope that the members of the Committee on Disarmament will give due attention to the proposal submitted for their consideration on the above-mentioned problem. We appeal to the members of the Committee to enter into negotiations on the basis of the draft convention now before them, with a view to finalizing agreement on it as soon as possible and thereafter bringing into force a new international instrument relating to the problem of disarmament and strengthening international peace and security.

Mr. MARTIN (United States of America): The United States today is tabling a draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. A parallel draft is being tabled by the delegation of the Soviet Union. We are presenting the draft convention as a basis for consideration by all governments and for negotiation in the CCD.

Previous discussions in the United Nations General Assembly, in the series of bilateral meetings between representatives of the Soviet Union and my Government, and here in this Committee, have indicated clearly the serious concern felt by many States, including my own, over the potentially catastrophic dangers to mankind if environmental modification techniques were to be developed as weapons of war. Comments made by the experts at our recent informal meetings on this subject underline the need to develop effective measures to control military or any other hostile use of those techniques having major adverse effects before such techniques can be developed and perfected.

(Mr. Martin, United States)

In the past few weeks, various delegations have provided data on the existing state of the art in environmental modification and have hypothesized about the nature of possible future techniques. From these data we can see that, while environmental warfare is not practical on a militarily significant scale at present, understanding and technology in the field are increasing. Significant advances may be possible in the course of time. Some scientists believe, for example, that methods might be developed for intentionally and selectively effecting harmful changes in the composition of the earth's atmosphere or in its climate, or causing floods or drought. An ambitious, incautious, or desperate State might then resort to the use of such techniques. At present there is an opportunity to prohibit such use. We should seize that opportunity.

The United States' delegation believes that development of a generally accepted convention along the lines of the draft we are tabling today would best allow us to accomplish the objectives of the General Assembly, the CCD, and of the United States-USSR joint statement of July 3, 1974. At the same time it would not discourage the development of peaceful and beneficial environmental modification techniques.

The formulation of a convention imposing restraints on environmental warfare presented difficult and complex problems of definition. This is the case because the development of environmental modification techniques is still at an early stage and a treaty will necessarily have to deal with future discoveries. This draft seeks to resolve such definitional problems.

The draft convention would prohibit military or any other hostile use -- as a means of destruction, damage, or injury -- of environmental modification techniques having widespread, long-lasting, or severe effects. The prohibition against "military or any other hostile use" covers two types of environmental warfare. First, it covers the hostile use of environmental modification techniques in armed conflict or to initiate such conflict. Secondly, it covers the use of such techniques for the specific purpose of causing destruction, damage, or injury, even when no other weapons are used or there is no other military operation taking place. We believe this draft provides a basis for distinguishing between the use of environmental modification techniques as weapons, which is covered by the prohibition, and the environmental impact of other weapons, which is not covered.

(Mr. Martin, United States)

The draft deals with environmental modification techniques whose use would have widespread, long-lasting or severe effects. This is in order to focus on the most important aspects of the problem: potential applications of such techniques as weapons which could cause the gravest harm to man and his environment. An important consideration in this regard is that in any limitation on the hostile uses of environmental modification techniques, the attainable degree of verification of compliance with treaty constraints obviously is related to the scale of activity. Accordingly, the possibilities for verification decrease as the size, duration, or severity of the activity diminishes.

Included in the proposed Convention is an illustrative list of effects of environmental modification techniques subject to prohibition. The list includes earthquakes and tsunamis; an upset in the ecological balance of a region; or changes in weather patterns, the state of the ozone layer, climate patterns or ocean currents.

The draft does not include a ban on military research or development. Such a ban would be ineffective in view of the dual applicability to civilian and military ends of much research and development in this field, and the difficulties which could be encountered in determining whether all parties were observing the prohibition.

Let me now comment on specific portions of the draft convention itself. The preamble briefly explains the problems that the convention is designed to address and provides a framework for the specific obligations which follow. The second paragraph expresses the point that advances of science and technology are giving rise to the possibility that deliberate actions can release significant natural forces or significantly alter the natural state, thus giving man the potential for modifying the environment to his own ends. The third paragraph highlights the essential difference between the great harm which military uses of environmental modification techniques might produce and possible benefits which peaceful uses might bring. The fourth paragraph reflects the commitment to limit the potential danger to mankind from such military activities. The fifth places the agreement in the context of the goals and objectives of the international community.

Articles I and II taken together form the operative substance of the convention. They are closely interdependent. Article I contains the basic obligation not to engage in military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques

(Mr. Martin, United States)

having widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage, or injury to another State party. It also provides for an obligation not to assist, encourage, or induce any other State, group of States, or international organization to engage in such use.

Article II provides a definition of environmental modification techniques. This term refers to techniques designed to manipulate deliberately the natural processes of the Earth, its oceans and atmosphere, or of outer space. The article is, therefore, comprehensive in its coverage of the natural environment. Article II also provides an illustrative list of effects which serves to define the type of phenomena to which the prohibition applies.

Article III makes it clear that the treaty does not apply to the use of environmental modification techniques for peaceful purposes and that it does not stand in the way of international co-operation in this regard.

Article IV provides for the legal implementation of the convention within individual States party, wherever needed for domestic reasons.

Article V deals with problems that might arise in applying the convention's provisions. The article sets forth the basic undertaking for consultation and co-operation among the parties and a procedure for submitting complaints to the United Nations Security Council in the event a party believes that there has been a breach of obligation.

Articles VI through IX set out provisions covering such matters as amendments, duration, and entry into force. The draft contains blanks in articles VI, VIII, and IX, where the convention's depositary or depositaries remain to be identified. In addition, paragraph two of article VI leaves open the number of instruments of acceptance of an amendment required for its entry into force for those governments that have accepted it, while paragraph three of article VIII leaves open the number of ratifications required to bring the convention into force. Article VII provides that the convention shall be of unlimited duration.

In tabling this draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, the United States believes that it can serve as the basis for the CCD's further consideration of the subject. We look forward to hearing views of other delegations on the proposal, and hope that our deliberations will lead to early agreement.

The CHAIRMAN: We have just heard the statements by the distinguished representatives of the USSR and the United States of America presenting parallel drafts of a convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, for consideration by this Committee.

I believe I am interpreting the feelings of the members of the Committee in welcoming this initiative. I am certain that the Committee will give the drafts due attention with a view to the elaboration of a convention on this very important new subject.

If I may be permitted to make a comment as representative of Yugoslavia, I would like to express the hope that next year we may have before us a draft convention of another announced "joint initiative" -- as it is usually referred to -- in regard to the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Are there any other representatives who would like to comment on the subject of the draft convention?

Mr. MISHRA (India): I just wanted to seek a clarification. Having one draft in English and the other in Russian, it is not possible for us to compare them. But would it be correct to say that these are not parallel drafts but a joint initiative?

Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): I should like to explain to the distinguished representative of India that the English text and the Russian text are completely identical. The Russian text was introduced by the delegation of the USSR and the English text by the delegation of the United States of America but both texts are absolutely identical and equally authentic.

Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden): In my intervention this morning I said that during this session of the CCD concrete results of our arduous efforts have so far been conspicuously lacking. I think at this moment it is only proper that, on behalf of the Swedish delegation, I should express satisfaction at the fact that, in this not quite but almost final hour of the summer session, we have some concrete results before us in terms of a draft convention on the prohibition of military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. I think that there is no need for me to give any evidence of the deep concern and the fundamental interest which the Swedish Government and the Swedish delegation attaches to the possibility of achieving a convention on these matters, to pursuing negotiations in the CCD as entrusted to us by the General Assembly. I would therefore like to offer my congratulations to the two delegations which have presented us with this draft convention.

(Mrs. Thorsson, Sweden)

I want to assure them and the CCD as a whole that we, together with other delegations of the CCD, will indeed study this proposal very carefully with the intention of starting negotiations on the basis of this draft. And I would like to use the term that Ambassador Martin used towards the end of his speech, the confidence that we shall reach an early agreement on a convention in this very, very, important matter.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Obviously it would be too early to comment, at this stage, on detailed questions of the draft convention which has just been introduced by the representative of the USSR, Ambassador Roshchin, and the representative of the United States, Ambassador Martin. Nevertheless, I should like to make some short remarks on this joint initiative concerning the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

My delegation attaches extraordinarily high importance to the submission of this joint draft text for such a convention by the USSR and the United States.

During this session I already had the occasion to outline in detail the position of the GDR towards the conclusion of such a convention, and I drew the conclusion that, in the view of the GDR, highest priority should be attached to this question in the work of the Committee on Disarmament.

In the meantime, many other representatives underlined in the Committee on Disarmament the necessity of the conclusion of such a convention. The exchange of opinions on this matter which took place in the Committee as well as the statements made by experts of the USSR and the United States and of other countries contributed towards strengthening the realization that in the face of the dangers arising for mankind from a possible broad application of environmental modification techniques for military and other purposes, counteractions must be taken in time.

The delegation of the GDR considers this initiative not only to be an appropriate means to prevent the misuse of the achievements of science and technology for military purposes. We see its importance also in the fact that it can make an important contribution to the continuation of the process of international political détente.

We would like to stress what is said in the preamble of the present draft, that the conclusion of such a convention could contribute to limiting the arms race and to bringing about disarmament.

In our view the initiative of the USSR and the United States constitutes a great step forward in our common efforts. It has created conditions which permit the Committee to start with the concrete discussion of the text of a convention.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

We are convinced that this initiative will also contribute towards animating the activity of the CCD and towards underlining its role as important organ for the preparation of agreements on international disarmament measures.

For that reason the delegation of the German Democratic Republic welcomes the submission of a joint draft of the USSR and the United States. It holds the view that the CCD should start as soon as possible the discussion of the draft text.

Permit me, Mr. Chairman, to assure you that the delegation of the GDR will make every effort to contribute to the early conclusion of the convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no further speakers on the question of the draft convention, there are two procedural questions before the Committee. First, there is the question of one or several informal meetings to consider the draft report of the CCD as proposed by the Co-Chairmen. The earliest possibility would appear to be tomorrow, Friday morning, at 10.30. Secondly, there is also the question of one or more additional formal meetings to continue the work of the CCD on nuclear-weapon-free zones, as suggested by Ambassador Schlaich this morning, as well as, possibly, other matters. The earliest opportunity for a formal meeting would appear to be on Monday, 25 August, at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. BARTON (Canada): Certainly I would be agreeable to coming tomorrow morning at 10.30 and starting to work informally on the draft report. We have to get it disposed of sooner or later and we might as well begin.

With respect to meetings of a formal nature, it depends on how many interventions we have facing us and we could make an estimate of that by perhaps asking informally what delegations' intentions are. I can say that my delegation has the intention of speaking briefly on Tuesday, not on nuclear-free zones but on chemical warfare. We will be tabling a working paper at that time, but other than that, I have no intention of intervening between now and the adoption of the report.

Mr. WYZNER (Poland): My delegation finds itself in a similar position to that of Canada. We have also inscribed our name on the list of speakers for Tuesday and our intention is quite similar. We still have a few brief comments to make and somehow it is my feeling at this late stage of our discussions, particularly taking into account that this is to be the last week of this year's session, that delegations would tend to make their statements rather compact. Therefore, I wonder if we are still faced with the prospect of one or more formal meetings devoted to the report and whether it is intended to have a formal meeting of the Committee as early as Monday? If we find ourselves in a

(Mr. Wyzner, Poland)

situation, say, that one meeting on Tuesday is not enough, let us consider it on Tuesday, or if necessary on Wednesday. Fixing a firm meeting now for Monday would be perhaps too early. So I would tend to agree with Ambassador Barton.

The CHAIRMAN: I am advised by the Secretariat that there are seven speakers for Tuesday.

Mr. MISHRA (India): I would agree with the suggestion of Ambassador Barton, of Canada, that we first find out informally how many speakers there are going to be on this particular study. Perhaps the delegations could indicate tomorrow at our informal meeting their wishes in regard to making statements next week. We could devote a few minutes tomorrow at the informal meeting to further discussion of the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other comments? I take it the Committee agrees that we should have an informal meeting tomorrow at 10.30 a.m. concerning the CCD report, during which time we would also discuss the possibility of having other informal or formal meetings of the CCD.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.