

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 27 February 1973, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. H. Khallaf

(Egypt)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Argentina:

Mr. V.E. BERASATEGUI

Brazil:

Mr. P.N. BATISTA

Mr. F.M. PERRI

Bulgaria:

Mr. O. MITEV

Burma:

U THAUNG LWIN

Canada:

Mr. W.H. BARTON

Mr. R.W. CLARK

Mr. D.R. MACPHEE

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. M. VEJVODA

Mr. J. STRUCKA

Mrs. V. BASETLIKOVA

Egypt:

Mr. H. KHALILAF

Mr. A.E. KHAIRAT

Mr. S.A. 'ABOU-ALI

Ethiopia:

Mr. M. IMRU

Mr. T. GEBRU

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES

Mr. F. GAJDA

India:

Mr. M.K. MANGALMURTI

Italy:

Mr. N. DI BERNARDO

Mr. P. BRUNI

Mr. L. RUSSIANI

Japan:

Mr. N. NISIBORI

Mr. H. MATSUMOTO

Mr. Y. HAMADA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES

Mr. M. MARIN

Mrs. M. PRIETO

Mongolia:

Mr. M. DUGERSUREN

Mr. N. BATSOURI

Mr. J. CHOINKHOR

Morocco:

Mr. M.A. KHATTABI

Mr. M. RAHALI

Netherlands:

Mr. M.J. ROSENBERG POLAK

Mr. E. BOS

Nigeria:

Mr. J.D.O. SOKOYA

Mr. A.A. OLUMIDE

Pakistan:

Mr. M.J. KHAN

Poland:

Mr. W. NATORF

Mr. S. TOPA

Mr. A. CZERKAWSKI

Mr. H. PAC

Romania:

Mr. C. ENE

Mr. O. IONESCO

Mr. A. SASU

Sweden:

Mr. L. ECKERBERG

Mr. U. REINIUS

Mr. S. ERICSON

Mr. J. LUNDIN

Union of the Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN

Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN

Mr. V.P. ABARENKOV

Mr. V.P. KALININ

United Kingdom:

Mr. H.C. HAINWORTH

Mr. D.F. DUNCAN

Mr. P.E. GERAHTY

Mr. J.T. MASEFIELD

United States of America:

Mr. J. MARTIN

Mr. R. KIRK

Mr. R.W. DREXLER

Mr. P. SEMLER

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. CVOROVIC

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. ILKKA PASTINEN

Alternate Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. R. BJORNERSTEDT

Special Consultant:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

Communiqué of the meeting

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 587th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador H. Khallaf, representative of Egypt.

A statement was made by the representative of the United Kingdom.

The delegation of Mexico submitted a "Letter dated 20 February 1973 from the Leader of the delegation of Mexico to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament" (CCD/394).

The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 1 March 1973, at 10.30 a.m.

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Mr. HAINWORTH (United Kingdom): This year our session opens in what, notwithstanding certain tragic events in recent days, we can all feel to be a more optimistic international climate. Not for many years have there been so many continuing negotiations taking place to resolve the tensions that have for so long been disturbing the fabric of international affairs. There is at last a prospect of peace in South-East Asia, and we must hope that the unresolved problems which still persist in South Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere can somehow be solved. In Europe in recent months we have seen the start at Helsinki of preparatory talks for a Conference on Security and Co-operation, and in Vienna discussions are now getting under way to prepare for negotiations on the complex question of Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in central Europe. Here in Geneva we have seen the beginning of a second round of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks.

All this, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations commented in his message, read to us on the opening day by his Special Representative, Mr. Pastinen -- and other distinguished representatives who have spoken before me have commented in the same sense -- all this gives legitimate cause for satisfaction, because we can see that the opportunities for progress are increasing. It is our task in this Committee to take advantage of these opportunities and to translate goodwill into action. Often in the past, representatives have had to remind the Committee that without an improvement in the international climate it would not be possible to achieve far-reaching results. Now we have an improvement in the international climate. Our task is to negotiate further measures to increase security, to increase confidence, and to release scarce resources for more productive ends than the maintenance of great defensive structures against each other. We shall need to apply ourselves with common sense and much effort to the tasks that lie ahead.

One question to which all those working in the field of disarmament and arms control must now give some consideration is the division of labour between the various forums now in existence in this field. This Committee in particular must demonstrate the distinct and effective role that it is capable of fulfilling. At the very least it is a sophisticated clearing-house for the ideas and technical contributions of a wide variety of States, many of which are not directly involved in east-west divergences. It is valuable both as such a meeting place and also as a forum in which to keep up pressure to make progress on major questions.

(Mr. Hainworth, United Kingdom)

The Strategic Arms Limitation negotiations, as I have noted, were resumed for a second round in November. Another session will open here in Geneva on 12 March. The participants have made it clear that their aim is to sustain and support the agreements that have already been negotiated, while at the same time persevering with the patient and detailed work of discovering what possibilities there are for practical and worth-while new agreements. In Vienna, too, there are hints that perhaps the exploratory talks on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions may eventually get down to business.

These forums provide opportunities to negotiate agreements and measures related to the work we are engaged in here. If it is suggested that the principal focus of all these talks is on problems of Europe, the reason is self-evident. In practice, Europe is the area in which the greatest number of men, arms, and armaments are concentrated. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks deal with the central issue of the vast destructive power of modern nuclear weapons. The negotiations that will, we hope, take place on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions may be even more complex, because the task will be to find some way of lowering the level of armed forces and armaments in central Europe while at the same time keeping and maintaining undiminished security for all.

I turn now to the wider horizon. Last year in New York, preliminary steps were taken towards the proposed World Disarmament Conference. The passage of General Assembly resolution 2930 (XXVII), establishing a Special Committee of 35 to examine the views and suggestions of governments on the subject, was a modest step in itself. On the other hand, during the course of the debates in New York, delegations, including the delegations of France and China, were able to exchange views not only on the World Disarmament Conference but also on other disarmament items. Thus a dialogue of sorts has begun. But as the representative of Zambia, Mr. Lusaka, said in New York, it was the unanimous view of the co-sponsors of resolution 2930 that the participation of the five nuclear-weapon States was essential in order to ensure the success of the Special Committee's work, and I myself said on that occasion that the Special Committee should meet only when the five member States in question had signified that they were ready to take their seats at the table.

(Mr. Hainworth, United Kingdom)

One aspect of arms control that might be suitable for a wide-ranging forum, such as our Committee here may be able to offer, is conventional weapons. It is important to keep in mind that if we are to progress towards a world which is not threatened by the use of armed force, nuclear and conventional disarmament must proceed in parallel. From the development angle, too, there is an increasing imperative to find means of stopping the diversion of resources of skilled personnel, of industrial production, and of scarce capital, particularly in the developing countries. Both our co-Chairmen in their respective statements on 20 February alluded to the desirability of engaging ourselves with this question, and it may be appropriate to do so in the parallel disarmament and development decades.

The British Government would naturally welcome international agreement on effective measures to reduce the burden which armaments impose on us all. It is sometimes suggested that one way of achieving progress in this direction would be by agreements to control the trade in conventional arms. But in the view of my delegation, the implementation of effective international agreements would require not only the active support of all the major supplying countries, but also the co-operation and active support of recipient countries.

In the nuclear field, my delegation was most heartened that one of the early actions of the new Government of Australia, shortly after taking office, was the deposition of its instrument of ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in London, Moscow and Washington. I believe, too, that, following approval by the Board of Governors of IAEA, which met in Mexico in September last year, of the agreement concerning safeguards to be applied in the Euratom countries, there will in the course of this year be an important extension of European support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty through further ratifications of that Treaty. It is of course the earnest hope of my delegation that such ratifications will be matched elsewhere in the world, and that in this way widespread progress can be made in strengthening this corner-stone of nuclear stability.

I turn now to the problem of underground nuclear weapon tests, that is, tests in the one environment for which we have as yet no international agreement such as would lead to the total cessation of all tests. Our Soviet colleague, Mr. Roshchin, in his statement of 20 February, said that his Government was in favour of a complete and immediate ban on nuclear tests on the assumption that all States ceased tests

(Mr. Hainworth, United Kingdom)

in all environments (CCD/PV.585, page 19), and he added that progress would only be possible with the participation of all the nuclear States in the negotiations (CCD/PV.585, page 20). It goes without saying that my delegation had noted what Mr. Roshchin has said in the past, for example on 20 June last year (CCD/PV.561, page 12). His most recent statement appears to my delegation to introduce a new element into our consideration of the problem and will of course be studied most closely by my Government.

Meanwhile, however, allow me to say that I believe that last year we made useful if unspectacular progress in increasing our knowledge of verification techniques available to us and of their limitations. This year we in Britain hope that the seismic array station processor (SASP), which was described in our working paper CCD/386 of 22 August 1972, will come into use. British research on this subject is continuing, and our scientists are always willing to explain their work to visiting scientists should they care, when they are in the United Kingdom, to visit Blacknest, which is the rather picturesquely named site of the British seismic research centre. However, today, well before our seismic array station processor actually comes into use, my delegation has been able to circulate informally to members of the Committee a further United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority report which analyses seismic waves from earthquakes and explosions in the Sino-Soviet Area during 1966. This report incorporates much of the detailed material which provided the basis for the analysis of the relationship between m_b and M_s in the working paper CCD/363/Rev.1 presented by my delegation on 25 April last year, and I hope my colleagues will find it useful.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I come to the last topic on which I wish to touch today. The chief piece of unfinished business before the Committee this year is the prohibition of the production and possession of chemical weapons. My delegation was encouraged by the way in which all members of the Committee were able to work together to bring a draft resolution on this subject before the First Committee at the last session of the General Assembly. As the representative of Egypt pointed out, when he introduced the draft resolution, "lengthy and delicate negotiations on its provisions took place between the various groups represented in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament". I believe that the resolution offers helpful guidance for the work of the Committee this year.

(Mr. Hainworth, United Kingdom)

The desired aim of my delegation, despite Press comments which might be interpreted as indicating otherwise, remains an effective comprehensive ban on the development, production, and stockpiling of chemical weapons. I have, however, already noted among some of my colleagues a certain degree of impatience and a feeling that all we need is merely to take a so-called political decision to get on with the matter. I am afraid I think such a view oversimplifies the nature of our problem. It is worth recalling precisely what it is that we are trying to do. We wish to see the destruction of stockpiles. We also wish to see an effective ban on the production of chemical weapons. We have, however, to recognize that even after a convention is in force, many chemical substances will continue to be produced and stored for industrial and other perfectly legitimate peaceful purposes. Some of these substances will be lethal, and some could have either direct or indirect military uses. Essentially, therefore, the ban on chemical weapons would involve a prohibition of the diversion of chemicals from peaceful purposes to purposes related to chemical warfare. There are difficult technical problems to be solved in this connexion, and although these undeniably have a political content it is wrong to say that all that is required is a simple political decision. My delegation has already made it clear that we wish to achieve progress in the Committee towards a complete ban on the production and possession of chemical weapons.

Last year, with the assistance of experts representing all elements in the Committee, we were able to make considerable progress on the principles which should govern the definition of chemical weapons in a convention. There are still questions to resolve, but I am hopeful that we shall be able to overcome them.

The chief problem, however, and the key to all progress in this field, is verification and the provision of adequate guarantees to those States which agree to give up any chemical weapons which they may possess and to renounce their right to possess them in future. As was stated by the British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Godber, in the First Committee of the General Assembly on 27 October 1972, we are looking for a regime which will provide firm assurances that chemical weapons have really been abolished so that States can be confident that their citizens or their armed forces need not fear chemical attack.

(Mr. Hainworth, United Kingdom)

With respect to this, my delegation has been struck by the number of representatives in the Committee who have supported the establishment in one form or another of a consultative body. It seems that a significant trend of opinion is also growing in the Committee on the question of the investigation of any complaints or doubts which States may have about the implementation of a convention. There is increasingly a feeling that what was agreed in the case of biological weapons would not be effective enough to deal with the very different problem presented by a ban on chemical weapons. My delegation is one of those which believe that it will be necessary to make a clear and firm distinction between the factual investigation of a complaint and the procedure for taking decisions in the light of the facts reported.

I do not wish today to examine the question of verification in any great detail. There are points where we seem to be on the road to agreement and there are other points where opinions are still deeply divided. We have to bear in mind precisely what it is we are trying to do. We wish to see a simultaneous destruction of all stockpiles of chemical weapons, and we need to be satisfied that all have been destroyed. We wish to see a complete cessation of the production of chemical weapons, and we have to be satisfied that this cessation really is complete.

This problem clearly poses crucial tests for the Committee on Disarmament. My delegation believes that this Committee should continue to make every effort to solve the problem of chemical weapons, whatever the difficulties may be in the way of negotiating a worth-while treaty.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.