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SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Lancaster House, London,  
on Tuesday, 3 September 1957, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. RITCHIE

(Canada)

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Mr. STASSEN (United States of America): The serious intention of the United States to proceed in a positive way to negotiate an agreement for partial measures of disarmament is reaffirmed. It is our view that the working paper (DC/SC.1/66) presented on 29 August by the delegations of Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States forms the basis for the affirmative approach to such an agreement, especially when it is taken in connexion with the proposals that had been presented on 30 April and 14 June by the delegation of the Soviet Union.

We have reviewed the statements made by the Soviet representative at the 151st meeting, and at the 153rd meeting. In emphasizing the sound proposals made by Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States, I should like to comment on them in relation to some of the statements made by the representative of the Soviet Union.

In making this statement today I wish first to place great emphasis upon the confirmed devotion of the United States to the objective of peace -- a just and durable peace. This is the confirmed and clearly stated policy of our Government. On 28 August the President re-emphasized that, so far as the United States is concerned, we shall never renounce our efforts to find ways and means to save mankind from the danger of war and to establish a just and lasting peace. The President was referring to our negotiations here and to the comments of the representative of the Soviet Union.

The objective of peace has been reflected, we believe, in the conduct of our Government, in our rapid demobilization at the end of the Second World War, and in the restraint we have shown in any situation which might have involved the use of force since that time. It is also an objective which reflects and is strengthened by the

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

broad religious foundation of the peoples of our country. The great religions which are adhered to by the overwhelming majority of our people have peace as their objective, and rule out aggressive designs upon peoples of other territories.

In fact, even this weekend, while I was in my own country, I saw the television transmission of a meeting held in Times Square in New York by one of our religious leaders, Dr. Graham. It was a great service in our first city. It included an emphasis on this devotion to peace, and on our belief in God, in relation to that objective.

Consequently, I do not wish to pass over the record of the 151st meeting without saying in the most categorical terms that the implications of the Soviet representative as to the intentions of the United States have no foundation in fact. It would be tragic if the Soviet Union should base its own policies upon such concepts.

The military efforts of the United States are devoted to defensive purposes. We know of no statement by General Norstad of the United States, the present Commander-in-Chief of the NATO forces, that would justify comments such as those made by the Soviet representative. If the Soviet Chairman has the impression that such statements have been made, then that impression should be corrected. If he had in mind the testimony of General Norstad before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on 7 June, he must have been referring to partial sentences or distorted reports. I quote significant excerpts from that testimony. General Norstad said:

"I mentioned earlier the fact that the Allied forces had a political authority just as national forces have, and from this political authority were received political directives. From those directives we derive our mission."

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

He also said:

"Our mission in general has been a constant one since 1951 and its basis is found in the North Atlantic Treaty itself. Our first task is to deter aggression, to prevent a war; and our second mission is to defend the NATO territory, the NATO peoples, if the deterrent fails."

Then he went on to speak of the prospects of peace and of the outlook from the Soviet standpoint. He spoke of a Soviet planner and of our deterrent to war, and he said, "He (the Soviet planner) must always face the decision: 'If I deliberately start a war, I will be destroyed'". I think he is faced with that today, and it is something that we ought to be very certain we always keep in mind. That is absolutely essential.

General Norstad continued:

"I would like to point out that this is not dependent upon whether or not he has an atomic capability as long as we have the capability, the known capability, and the will to use it. With the forces in the shield, plus the retaliatory forces I have described, I believe we can have an effective deterrent and make a great contribution to the prevention of war."

This is very different from the statement the representative of the Soviet Union made about forces for striking a first blow at the Soviet Union. There is no such intention. There has been no such declaration. There are no such preparations. Our objective is peace; our mission is defence; our aim is the prevention of war. If there has been some misreading, some misreporting, or some mistaken analysis it is important that it be corrected.

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

If the Soviet representative had in mind some other statements made by General Norstad, I wish we could be told what they were so that their source could be analysed and their complete context brought forward so as to establish clearly the defensive nature of our military forces. The very fact that in the wake of the Second World War we reduced our armed forces to such a very low level, and our whole history with, as I have said, the religious foundations and beliefs of our people, should leave no doubt that we are not a people which prepares for war against any other peoples. We are not a nation which has any warlike intentions. We are a nation that will make great sacrifices to preserve peace, to defend others against aggression and to defend our own territories and our own vital interests. It is in the light of our intention to improve the prospects of peace that we are engaging in this negotiation.

The Soviet representative indicated that I had not clearly understood his speeches and that I should read them through more thoroughly. I would say, after rereading them, that I still do not understand them. The general tone of his speech at our 151st meeting and the nature of its approach seem to be that of a speech designed to break off negotiations; and yet, at the same time, it contains a passage such as this:

"There are at the present time real possibilities for the attainment of an agreement on some of the more urgent measures relating to disarmament and the removal of the threat of an atomic war. The opportunity must on no account be let slip." (DC/SC.1/PV.151, p. 30)

Those are two sentences with which the United States is in full accord; but we cannot understand the relationship of that paragraph to the tone and nature of so much of the rest of the speech.

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

If the Soviet Union does wish to proceed to an agreement we do need answers on how to interpret its position at the present time -- particularly in relation to the concrete proposals which Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States have advanced in an endeavour to reach such an agreement.

After very careful and thorough consideration, and in a move to meet the position of the Soviet Union, we have joined in a proposal for a twenty-four months' suspension of nuclear weapons testing. Is this a proposal that has value in the view of the Soviet Union? Is it a proposal that the Soviet Union can accept? We do place some conditions upon it. Which of the conditions, if any, are unacceptable? We need to have a concrete and clear understanding of positions if we are to proceed successfully in our negotiations.

We divide the twenty-four months' period into two periods of twelve months with the expectation that certain matters would be accomplished within the first twelve-months' period. Agreement would be reached on the installation and maintenance of the necessary controls, including inspection posts with scientific instruments located within the territories of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, the area of the Pacific Ocean and at such other places as may be necessary, with the consent of the Governments concerned. We had understood that the Soviet Union was willing to agree to these provisions. At one point the Soviet delegation indicated that it did not intend that there should be any delay in the installation of these inspection posts. It noted our comment on the possibility of a longer period of test suspension if these posts were promptly installed. Now that we have made this concrete proposal, has the Soviet Union changed its position in this matter? Is the Soviet Union willing to cease testing under the conditions set forth in section V of the working paper submitted by the four delegations?

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

At one point in our discussion of the matter of the work of technical experts, it was my understanding that the chairman of the Soviet delegation said that if we agreed on a period of time for the suspension of nuclear testing then it would be fruitful for technical experts to meet. We have agreed on a two-year period. If that agreement is sustained at this stage of our negotiations, can technical experts then go to work, as originally suggested by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom?

With regard to the second twelve-months' period, there is a requirement that the installation of control for the suspension of tests should have been completed. Is that condition satisfactory to the Soviet Union?

Then we have a further provision -- "if progress satisfactory to each party concerned is being achieved in the preparation of an inspection system for the cessation of the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes under paragraph IV A 1. ..." (DC/SC.1/66, para. V D) I have noted the Soviet representative's adverse comments on this requirement. I am not certain how extensive this adverse view is. Is the Soviet Union opposed to having experts of our countries make an endeavour to work out an inspection system which could provide for the cessation of production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes? Is it unwilling to attempt to fulfil that objective unless that objective is itself connected with a complete elimination, which, as I have understood, was agreed by all to be uncontrollable? In considering this aspect of the situation, it is very important that we clearly understand the position of the Soviet Union at this time if we are not to "let slip" the opportunity for agreement.

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

Have we made progress in these negotiations towards reaching an agreement on a two-year period of test suspension, or when the Soviet Union spoke of a two- or three-year period and of a willingness to have inspection posts in the various territories in conjunction with such a suspension were those not real proposals? Is it that the link to the cessation of production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes is completely unacceptable to the Soviet Union and that it is not willing to attempt to devise a system, through the work of experts? We have not included in our proposals a provision that there must be a guarantee that the experts would attain a successful result. No one can guarantee the results of such a task, which is complex and unprecedented. We have stated that we would not suspend tests beyond the two years unless the effort to prepare an inspection system was successful and unless a cut-off could be implemented. Is the period of two years unacceptable from the Soviet standpoint, or is the entire principle of a cessation of production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes unacceptable?

The question has been raised of the production of nuclear weapons in great quantities after the cut-off with materials produced previously. The United States has not now and does not intend to have produced any large stockpiles of fissionable materials that would continue to be used for weapons purposes after a cut-off. The fissionable materials of the United States have either been placed in weapons for purposes of defence or have been promptly devoted to peaceful purposes, either for our own non-weapons uses in our own programme or in our international co-operation through the "Atoms for Peace" programme, through the International Atomic Energy Agency, or through bilateral agreements with other countries for non-weapons purposes.



(Mr. Stassen, United States)

The United States has taken steps so that a supply of uranium ore is available for all the various purposes that can be foreseen for the next ten years. But this ten-year supply of uranium ore would not affect the cut-off for weapons purposes. Quite the contrary, the cut-off would come at the production plants, and the uranium ore, of which there is a supply available, would itself be cut off from weapons purposes. The uranium ore would be refined exclusively for non-weapons purposes under the proposals which the United States, together with Canada, France and the United Kingdom, has made.

Of course, if the cut-off itself is completely unacceptable then that presents us with one situation; but if there are certain circumstances under which a cut-off is acceptable, then the question arises as to the proposal for future transfers from weapons purposes to non-weapons purposes in specific ratios, as set out in the working paper. The Soviet Union, so far as I know, has never responded to this particular aspect of our proposals. Are they completely unacceptable? Are there conditions under which they would be acceptable? In order to proceed constructively in these important negotiations, we need to know the specific view of the Soviet Union upon these proposals.

I have noted, too, some critical comment regarding the provisions against transfers. There were statements that the United States had transferred weapons to other States. This is not correct. The United States has not transferred nuclear weapons to any other State. In fact, the laws of the United States prohibit such transfer. These provisions against transfer, qualified as they are, are part of

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

carefully developed plans to bring the whole nuclear weapons situation gradually under control in the future and to decrease the danger of a modern war. Are provisions of this kind acceptable to the Soviet Union? They are moderate provisions against transfer, but they constitute a definite step towards bringing the nuclear weapons situation under control.

With regard to the renunciation of use, as outlined in section III of the Four-Power proposals, it is believed that this is sound and logical and that it will be supported generally by the Members of the United Nations. It cannot be expected that when, as the result of an armed attack, States are placed in a situation of individual or collective self-defence they would consider themselves to have renounced the use of weapons of any type in their defence. In fact, the frequent Soviet reference to the chemical and bacteriological provisions of the treaties and protocols of 1928 caused us to note that its own protocols at that time were not to apply to any State that used either chemical or bacterial weapons, or to any State allied with a State that used them. It was not a complete renunciation of use from the Soviet Union's standpoint. We have also invited a formulation on this particular subject that would be mutually acceptable in the view of the Soviet Union, emphasizing that we would not accept a complete renunciation of use.

In the United Nations Charter there are certain restraints on the use of any weapons and, likewise, certain rights of individual or collective self-defence. The statement of the Soviet representative indicated that some of the preceding discussions or proposals on this subject were more to his liking than the present formulation. Is the Soviet delegation prepared to accept one of the preceding formulations? Is it prepared to let the matter rest solely on the United Nations Charter itself? Can we have more precision with regard to the position of the Soviet Union in this important matter?

In the matter of force levels we do have agreement on the first-step levels of 2.5 million and 750,000. We do not have agreement on the conditions under which, or without which, the lower levels are to be attained. Here again the United States delegation would welcome a more precise statement of the Soviet position.

We do not interpret the working paper of 29 August as in any sense a step backward in this connexion. We do not understand the Soviet comment that the provision for progress towards solution of political issues makes the attainment of lower levels impossible. Does the Soviet Union rule out progress towards the solution of political issues? Must not progress towards the solution of political issues be a mutual objective if there is to be a better prospect of a lasting peace?

We do not look upon the reference to other essential States becoming parties to the convention as an obstacle or a bar, but rather as the statement of a logical requirement. Would not the Soviet Union also be interested in the force levels of other States in relation to reducing to lower levels at later stages? We do not specify rigidly, in advance, which shall be the other essential States. Thus the question can be evaluated between us at the time. We regard this not as a step backward but, rather, as the spelling out of the kind of conditions we have always discussed in the Sub-Committee as being the conditions that would lead to a better prospect of peace and, at the same time, to the lower force levels that we would be pleased to reach at the earliest possible date under sound conditions.

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

Is it the position of the Soviet Union that unless the lower levels are specified in its own terms it is not willing to accept the 2.5 million and 750,000 levels and that, therefore, we have no agreement on first-step levels at all? Here again we would like to have a clearer understanding of the position of the Soviet Union.

On section I B, which deals with placing armaments in storage depots, I have had the impression that we were agreed. Is that still the situation? With regard to the reductions in military expenditures, the type of an agreement that is made and the question of how many of these partial measures are fitted together -- and under what terms -- will obviously affect the amount of reduction of military expenditure. How many of these provisions is the Soviet Union willing to accept in a partial measures agreement, and what is its position on what reduction in military expenditure should be accomplished in the first year in relation to the partial measures? We have the impression that the United States has made greater reductions in military expenditure from the levels of the Second World War than has the Soviet Union. We believe the situation in the future under a disarmament agreement such as we have proposed would be that, provided security improved, the United States would be making extensive reductions in military expenditures.

Section VI of our working paper provides for a study of the control of the use of outer space. Is the Soviet Union willing to engage in such a study, or is this an unacceptable proposal when linked to the other provisions?

We have interpreted the Soviet response on section VII to be that the broad proposals for the opening of our entire territories to the beginning of inspection are rejected by the Soviet Union, and I gather by the ensuing comment that the Soviet delegation has confirmed that analysis.

(R. Stassen, United States)

We have not interpreted the comments upon the smaller zone in the same way. There has been a devaluation of the small zone proposal. Is it, then, a proposal that might be fitted into the partial measures, or is there a counter-proposal in this connexion? It will be recalled that the proposal (DC/SC.1/55) of 30 April requested that very extensive territory of the United States -- including highly industrialized areas, atomic testing plants, missile testing stations, aviation factories and atomic plants -- should be opened, and that only less developed territory of the Soviet Union should be opened. The alternative proposal in the working paper of 29 August suggests less developed territories on both sides in which a beginning could be made. The areas generally in Alaska and Eastern Siberia were included in the Soviet document of 30 April. Can a beginning be made in this respect as a part of the partial measures agreement? From such a beginning -- even though the Soviet Union may consider this not to be significant territory -- could methods be developed and the experience of working together be obtained in a way that would lead towards more significant joint action?

We noted the Soviet comments regarding the European area. It will be seen from section VII paragraph E of our working paper that if the broad proposals were rejected a more limited zone of inspection in Europe could be discussed, but only on the understanding that this would include a significant part of the territory of the Soviet Union as well as the other countries of Eastern Europe. Is this a matter that should now be explored?

So far as the forces in Europe are concerned in relation to the proposals of 30 April, reductions of force levels, lowering of expenditures, and cutting down armaments will have as their natural consequence, from the standpoint of the United States, a smaller number of forces beyond our borders and a smaller number

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

of bases. We would assume that from the standpoint of the Soviet Union the reductions of its general force levels would likewise result in a smaller number of its forces being in Central Europe beyond its borders. Is this a satisfactory method -- moving in the first limited step, and then gaining from that experience? We have made it clear that a proposal for a one-third reduction in Germany was not in our view a matter that should be a part of a step to reduce to the level of 2.5 million. There again, a more precise statement of positions is the best method of ensuring that the opportunity for the attainment of agreement shall not be "let slip".

In dealing with the various inspection measures we have endeavoured to make it clear that a start would be made in a limited manner and growth and development would occur by mutual agreement and consent. We have endeavoured to make clear not only our willingness to make broader beginnings but also our recognition of the greater likelihood of small beginnings.

We have brought these matters together in one working paper, not in order to make any one part more difficult to achieve, but, rather, in order to increase the likelihood of fitting together small moves -- some of more interest to one side than to the other -- and combining them into a partial measures treaty that would be in the interest of both sides. Our entire approach is based, as I have emphasized on the desire to improve the prospects of peace.

We are convinced that the working paper presented on 29 August, viewed in the light of the earlier Soviet proposals of 30 April and 14 June, does form a basis which, if there is a mutual will to negotiate an agreement, could lead promptly to fruitful negotiations towards that end. It would be an agreement that was workable,

(Mr. Stassen, United States)

practical, and realistic. It would end the eleven years of failure to agree. It would mark a new beginning in the relations between the nations of the world in this atomic age.

Mr. MOCH (France)(translated from French): Once again I will refrain from dealing with the substance of the debate and from replying to Mr. Zorin's extemporized criticisms. Mr. Stassen has just done so with great precision, and I should only be able to repeat what he has just said on the topics about which Mr. Zorin commented.

I should like simply to say that France wants disarmament and wants it unanimously. This indeed is one of the subjects on which all Frenchmen are firmly united. Secular nations, too, and not only those inspired by religious feelings, are calling for peace through disarmament.

They have at least four motives. The first is respect for human life, a principle to which all men of good will, whether religious, secular, agnostic or atheist, subscribe. The second is the memory of sufferings undergone, of bereavements like unhealed wounds, of ruins strewn over a land which has, alas, been a classic battlefield at any rate since the Roman conquest and the invasion of the barbarian hordes from the East, down to the infinitely more cruel invasion by Hitler's armies. The third motive is the fear of what a war would be like in the present state of science -- a war likely to destroy every vestige of life over broad tracts of the globe. The fourth is economic and materialistic: the knowledge that it is pointless to spend hundreds of thousands of millions of dollars every year on unproductive work when so many social tasks could usefully be achieved.

(Mr. Moch, France)

Having said this, I will add that the situation here today seems to me clear. On 29 August, we made, on behalf of the four Powers represented around this table, definite proposals which are in part similar, in part parallel, and in part contradictory to the earlier Soviet proposals. I readily recognize -- we all recognize -- that since the beginning of these conversations the Soviet Government has modified its initial positions; but the same is true of ourselves, as Mr. Stassen has emphasized, and this movement has been particularly marked in the case of some of us who departed considerably from our original position in signing this joint document. Thus all that can be said is that the respective positions set out in the latest four-Power document and in the Soviet documents are less far apart than were certain initial individual positions of 1955. For me, in spite of everything, this is a reason for optimism. Mr. Zorin's last speeches do not move me to complete pessimism. At our meeting of 29 August I quoted a precedent: that of Mr. Malik, who in the summer of 1954 rejected out of hand an Anglo-French plan which a few weeks later was accepted as a basis for discussion by the Soviet Government.

I believe -- I wish to believe -- that the Soviet Government desires peace through disarmament as sincerely as we do. It is because I believe this that I earnestly appeal to Mr. Zorin to make himself the interpreter of our common ideas concerning future procedure. Needless to say, if he has any questions to ask us on any point of this document in order to elucidate anything he may find unclear, we are at his disposal to reply to him for as long as he may wish, without any time limit. If, however, he has not, I do not see what practically useful work we could do here until the Soviet Government has completed that exhaustive study which I am sure, in pursuance of its practice of methodical work, it will not fail to make of our last proposal.



(Mr. Moch, France)

The French delegation will gladly allow it all the time it may need for such an exhaustive study, since we in fact believe that the less hasty its reply, that is to say, the more closely it is based on an exhaustive study, the greater the likelihood that it will permit a resumption of negotiations.

I must confess that during the six years I have been a member of the Disarmament Commission or its Sub-Committee I have displayed a patience of which I should not have thought myself capable at the outset of our work. I am, however, willing to draw further on my reserves to sustain me through a few more weeks in the anticipation of a Government reply, which I cannot believe will be completely negative. Pending its receipt, I wonder whether any useful purpose can be served by continuing our exchange of views here, apart from replying to any questions which may be put to us. That is another matter on which I would urge each one of us to reflect.

The CHAIRMAN: If no other representative wishes to speak, I take it that we should consider the question of our next meeting. Are there any suggestions?

Mr. STASSEN (United States of America): I would suggest 3.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom): Before we proceed with the discussion of our next meeting I would just like to remind the Sub-Committee that at our last meeting I did say that I had listened with disappointment and considerable surprise to the peremptory remarks with which Mr. Zorin appeared to reject the working paper (DC/SC.1/66) on partial disarmament measures submitted by the four Western delegations at the beginning of that meeting. It goes without saying, of course,

(Mr. Noble, United Kingdom)

that Mr. Zorin had given his Government no time to consider that important document with its set of balanced proposals, or to digest the fact that it had the general support of no fewer than fifteen countries, before speaking of it in so cavalier a fashion. At the end of the meeting I asked Mr. Zorin whether what we had just heard from him was the final Soviet reply to our proposals. Mr. Zorin did not reply. Later on he said that he would be prepared to meet today to discuss "basic problems of disarmament". I wonder whether he would like to answer my question now before we discuss our next meeting, because, as Mr. Moch said just now, the point arises: What are we going to discuss at future meetings of this Sub-Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further speakers on this question of substance before we conclude our discussion of the date of the next meeting?

Since there do not appear to be any further speakers on that question, the Sub-Committee now has before it Mr. Stassen's suggestion that its next meeting should take place at 3.30 tomorrow. Is there any objection to that, or any alternative suggestion?

Mr. NOBLE (United Kingdom): Perhaps I might press my point again.

Mr. Zorin said at our last meeting that he would be prepared to meet today to discuss "basic problems of disarmament". Is he going to discuss "basic problems of disarmament" tomorrow, because he has not done so today?

Mr. ZORIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): I can answer Mr. Noble straight away — I do propose to do so. I intend to discuss basic problems of disarmament, which in my view are not contained solely in the proposals submitted by the Western delegations, but also in those presented by the Soviet Union.

I am prepared to meet tomorrow at 3.30 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Since there are no further speakers, and since we appear to be agreed to meet tomorrow at 3.30 p.m., it remains for us merely to approve the usual communique, which reads:

"The Sub-Committee of the Disarmament Commission held its one hundred and fifty-fourth meeting on 3 September 1957, at 3.30 p.m. at Lancaster House, under the chairmanship of Ambassador C.S.A. Ritchie and continued its discussions.

"The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 4 September 1957, at 3.30 p.m."

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.