

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

UNITED NATIONS  
CENTRE FOR DISARMAMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL AND SECURITY AFFAIRS



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COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 496 (V)

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held in Conference Room 5, Lake Success, Long Island  
on 14 February 1951, at 11.00 a.m.

|                            |                   |   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <u>Temporary Chairman:</u> | Secretary-General |   |
|                            | Mr. SOARES        | Brazil  |
|                            | Mr. RIDDELL       | Canada  |
|                            | Dr. TSIANG        | China   |
|                            | Dr. ALBORNOZ      | Ecuador   |
|                            | Mr. LACOSTE       | France  |
|                            | Mr. DAYAL         | India   |
|                            | Mr. VON BALLUSECK | Netherlands   |
|                            | Mr. KURAL         | Turkey  |
|                            | Mr. MALIK         | Union of Soviet Socialist<br>Republics                  |
|                            | Mr. COULSON       | United Kingdom of Great Britain<br>and Northern Ireland |
|                            | Mr. NASH          | United States of America                                |
|                            | Mr. NINCIC        | Yugoslavia  |
| <u>Secretariat:</u>        | Mr. ZINCHENKO     | Assistant Secretary-General                             |
|                            | Dr. FREY          | Committee Secretary                                     |

1. Opening remarks by the Secretary-General

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN stated that it fell to him, as Secretary-General, to open the first meeting of the Committee. In resolution 496 (V), the General Assembly had recognized the lack of agreement on the question of atomic energy and conventional armaments but had expressed the desire to carry the work forward towards a comprehensive system of armaments control. It had established the Committee to report upon ways and means of co-ordinating the work of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional

/Armaments

Armaments and upon the advisability of their functions being merged.

The Atomic Energy Commission had been established unanimously by resolution 1 (I) of the General Assembly and the Commission for Conventional Armaments by the Security Council in response to the unanimously adopted resolution 41 (I). The former Commission had admitted a deadlock in 1948 and the six permanent members, who had been consulting in search of a basis for agreement, had adjourned about thirteen months ago. The Commission for Conventional Armaments had also failed to find agreement. The results of the work of the two commissions were to be found in their reports which contained much useful material but reflected the lack of the essential basic agreements.

In the present state of world tension, it might seem academic to proceed with planning on the regulation and reduction of armaments. The Secretary-General did not agree with that view, but believed the work of the Committee to be one of the vital undertakings of the United Nations. In his proposals for the development of a 20-year programme for achieving peace, the second and third points were concerned with the questions of atomic energy and conventional armaments. The General Assembly, in acting upon his proposals, had requested the appropriate organs to give them consideration and report to the next session. He had further suggested re-examining the separation of these two problems in two commissions and considering the advisability of linking their work more closely. The Secretary-General had previously expressed his views on the interrelation of the regulation of armaments and efforts at political settlement. In resolution 496 (V), the General Assembly had given expression in the first paragraph to a similar view.

Although Member Governments should provide for adequate defences, they should not lose sight of the ultimate goal. One of the greatest days in the history of the human race would be when the United Nations succeeded in removing the burden of armaments through a universal system of collective security. It was to be hoped that the Committee could contribute to progress, particularly by establishing procedures. If they achieved a full re-examination of the problem, despite the difficulties besetting them, they would receive the gratitude of the world.

Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said there was no need to stress the importance of the questions before the Committee. From the very

/beginning

beginning the Soviet Union in all organs of the United Nations had attached great significance to the problems of the reduction of armaments and the prohibition of atomic weapons as means of reinforcing the peace and development of the good relations between peoples. It had been on the initiative of the Soviet Union Government that resolution 41 (I), the first decision on these questions, had been adopted. In subsequent sessions of the General Assembly, the Soviet Union had always submitted concrete proposals concerning the need to prohibit atomic weapons as weapons of mass destruction and aggression and bring about the reduction of armaments and armed forces.

If the United Nations had not yet reached agreement on the prohibition of atomic weapons and the reduction of armaments, the cause was not the existence of two commissions but the fact that the United States and some other governments had been thwarting the decision of the General Assembly concerning the prohibition of atomic weapons and reduction of armaments. Instead of this the armaments race had developed in the United States and its dependent countries on such a large scale that it threatened international peace and security.

In view of the importance of the questions before it, the Soviet Union delegation believed that the representatives on the Committee should be fully empowered and should represent the appropriate nations and governments. Pursuant to their position of principle on the representation of China in the United Nations, and considering that the Kuomintang representative represented neither China nor the Chinese people, the Soviet Union delegation believed that it would be in the interests of the Committee and its work for the representative of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China to be invited as the representative of China. Mr. Malik therefore submitted the following draft resolution:

"The Committee of Twelve

"Decides:

"To invite the representative of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China to take part in the work of the Committee as the representative of China."

The Soviet Union delegation insisted that the question be decided before the Committee proceeded with any other topic.

/Mr. NASH

Mr. NASH (United States of America) stated that the controversy over the representation of China was still before the General Assembly. The view of his Government was that representatives of the Chinese Communist regime should not be seated in United Nations bodies, especially because that regime was engaged in hostilities against the United Nations. The General Assembly had adopted, on 14 December 1950, a resolution providing that in the event of such controversies the General Assembly should consider each case in the light of the Charter and attendant circumstances, and that the attitude of the Assembly should be taken into account in other organs. Pending a decision of the Assembly, it would be unwise to take a decision on the question. Mr. Nash therefore moved, pursuant to Rule 115 of the General Assembly,

"...that discussion of the proposal of the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to unseat the representative of the Chinese Nationalist Government and seat the representative of the Chinese Communist regime be postponed until the General Assembly has taken action."

It was the view of Mr. Nash that passage of the motion would have the effect of continuing the Chinese Nationalist representative in the Committee, as in the parent organ.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN stated that the Committee had before it the Soviet Union proposal and the United States motion for postponement of discussion upon that proposal. In ordinary practice, the question of postponement had priority. The usual practice of committees of the General Assembly was to allow two speakers for and two against such motions.

Dr. TSIANG (China) said that at the very beginning of the Committee's work the propaganda speech of the Soviet Union representative had already blighted the hopes expressed by the Secretary-General. Such propaganda needed no refutation, for the world knew where lay the threat to peace. The Soviet Union and its satellites had armed forces four or five times the size of those of the rest of the world, yet the Soviet Union tried to find other causes for the failure of the United Nations.

/With regard

With regard to the Soviet Union proposal, there had already been much debate elsewhere on that issue. Technically, the proposal was wrong as the composition of the Committee has been established by the General Assembly and the Committee was not free to determine it. Moreover, the proposal sought to introduce a representative of a regime which was not Chinese, but a creature of the Soviet Union and subservient to its purposes. That regime also had been condemned by the United Nations as having committed aggression. On no grounds could it be introduced into any United Nations body.

Mr. COULSON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) supported the United States motion, but not for identical reasons. The United Kingdom delegation believed that, regardless of the effect of the General Assembly resolution of 14 December, the Committee was merely a body set up by the Assembly and not an independent entity. Therefore, it was not competent to decide the question, which should be settled by the parent body.

Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it was no surprise that the United States had advocated the continuance of the Kuomintang representative. For a long time the United States had made a fiction of the United Nations, as was shown particularly by its aggression in Korea and by adoption of unlawful and shameful resolutions by the fifth session of the General Assembly. Now it seemed that the United States wished to make a fiction of the work of the Committee connected directly with the international peace and security. The intention of the United States evidently was to discuss important questions with the representative of a fictitious regime. No one could consider seriously the representative of the Kuomintang as a participant in such important discussions. Nor could anyone doubt that the Central People's Government, representing the 475,000,000 people of China and having considerable armed forces, was the only legal Government of China and should participate.

/Naturally,

Naturally, it would be easier for the United States to enter the discussions with an obedient puppet rather than the plenipotentiary representative of China. It was characteristic also that the representative of the United States had referred to the Committee on Chinese representation, the establishing of which was imposed by the United States in order to delay a solution and have a pretext for its postponement. It gave the United States delegation the possibility to defend the arbitrary actions in the United Nations and deprive the People's Republic of China of participation in the work of the United Nations.

The Soviet Union delegation insisted that questions having the importance of reduction of armaments and the prohibition of atomic weapons should be considered by true plenipotentiaries of actual governments and not by fictitious representatives of groups in the pay of foreign powers. Even the United States press recognized that United States Government bureaux had sought information, in connexion with the increase of taxes, on the income of Kuomintang representatives in the United Nations.

There was no need to dwell upon the statement of the Kuomintang representative which was merely the old, worn-out record of the Voice of America. The provocative statement about the forces of the Soviet Union was made to please the American masters. The fact that the Chinese people had freed themselves from foreign domination and had established the free independent state was well known and no slanders of the opponents of the Central People's Government could hide the significance of this great historical fact.

The Soviet Union delegation insisted that their proposal be discussed and voted upon before the Committee proceeded. Only the presence of representative delegates could guarantee the proper level of discussions and the adoption of necessary decisions. Fictitious representatives could not assist in the successful solution of the questions before the Committee.

The United States motion for postponement was put to the vote. It was adopted by 9 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.

Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said his delegation deemed it necessary to state that the decision of the Committee was unjust and illegal. They would not consider the Kuomintang representative as the representative of China and would not recognize his vote in the voting.

/Mr. RIDDELL

Mr. RIDDELL (Canada) said he had voted for the United States motion because his delegation did not consider it appropriate for a Committee of the General Assembly to adopt a position inconsistent with that adopted by the Assembly while it was still in session. In other circumstances other considerations might apply, and for that reason Mr. Riddell was a little unhappy about the concluding phrase of the motion. In existing circumstances, however, the Committee had no alternative to conforming to the General Assembly's position.

2. Consideration and adoption of the principles governing the chairmanship of the Committee and selection of the Chairman

Mr. NASH (United States of America) proposed deferring the final decision concerning the chairmanship. In the meantime, the Committee might follow the alphabetical principle under which the chair would be assumed temporarily by the representative of Brazil. He wished his suggestions to be considered as a motion.

Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he wished to complete the United States proposal by adding that the first chairman should be selected by lot. In view of the precedents of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments, in which the chairmanship rotated in the English alphabetical order and the tenure of office was one calendar month, the Soviet Union delegation considered that that procedure should be followed. However, because the work of the Committee would not exceed six months and not all members would have the opportunity of presiding, the first chairman should be selected by lot. Another possibility would be to establish two weeks as the period for the chairmanship.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) said that the Soviet Union suggestion was acceptable, but he observed that it seemed to imply a decision that the chairmanship should rotate. Mr. Nash's suggestion had been that the question should be deferred, and a temporary chairman only should be selected who would preside over the remainder of the meeting and the opening of the next meeting. For that temporary chairman, selected by lot would be a fair method. Then the first business at the next meeting would be to determine whether to follow the rotating principle or select a permanent chairman.

/Mr. MALIK

Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said he was not clear about the reasons for postponement. They had ample time to dispose of the question, and then could proceed with matters of substance without reverting to the chairmanship. They could decide not only upon the first chairman but also upon the rotation principle.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) replied that his delegation did not feel strongly on the matter, but had thought that there were considerations to be weighed. They were prepared to reach a decision if the Committee so desired. However, they did not favour the suggestion of a two weeks' period for the chairmanship. It would not furnish continuity and had elements of confusion in it.

A brief discussion between the TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN, Mr. NASH (United States of America) and Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) showed that the United States wished for an opportunity to hear the views of other members, and that the Soviet Union proposal was that the chairmanship should rotate in English alphabetical order, the period being one calendar month and the first chairman being drawn by lot. A two week period had only been mentioned as a possibility.

Mr. LACOSTE (France) suggested that, in view of the late hour, they should not try to settle the matter but adjourn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN stated that, as there were no objections, the meeting would adjourn. He would set the date for the next meeting in consultation with the members and again preside as temporary chairman.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

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