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COMMITTEE OF TWELVE

(ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 496 (V))

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 28 March 1951, at 3 p.m.

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twenty-third plenary meeting of the General Assembly,
13 December 1950 (496 (V)).

Chairman: Mr. NINCIO

Yugoslavia

Members: Mr. TELHEIRA SOARES

Brazil

Mr. HOIMES

Canada

Mr. WEI

China

Mr. QUEVEDO

Ecuador

Mr. LAGOSTE

France

Mr. DAYAL

India

Members (continued):

Mr. LUNS	Netherlands
Mr. SAVIT	Turkey
Mr. TSARAPKIN	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Mr. COULSON	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Mr. NASH	United States of America
<u>Secretariat:</u> Mr. ZINCHENKO	Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Security Council Affairs
Mr. PEISSEL	Director of the Bureau of Documents
Mr. FREY	Secretary of the Committee

The CHAIRMAN, paying a tribute to the late Mr. R. G. Riddell, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations and Rapporteur of the Committee of Twelve, said his untimely death would be very deeply felt by all the members of the Committee. He was sure that he would be interpreting their wishes in conveying to the Canadian delegation an expression of the Committee's deepest sympathy.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN observed that the death of Mr. Riddell left vacant the post of Rapporteur. He suggested including the election of a Rapporteur in the agenda.

ELECTION OF A RAPPORTEUR

Mr. COULSON (United Kingdom) nominated Mr. Luns (Netherlands) as Rapporteur

Mr. IACOSTE (France) and Mr. WEI (China) supported that nomination.

In the absence of any further nominations, the CHAIRMAN declared Mr. Luns (Netherlands) unanimously elected Rapporteur of the Committee of Twelve.

Mr. LUNS (Netherlands) thanked the Committee for the great honour it had bestowed on him. He deeply regretted the tragic circumstances which ^{had} necessitated

/the election

The election of a new Rapporteur. It had been his privilege to know the late Mr. Riddell personally, and he therefore wished to associate himself with the tributes paid to his memory.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) also associated himself with the tributes paid to the late Mr. Riddell.

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) suggested that the Committee should dispose of some procedural questions before going on to the next item on its agenda. He asked that the Committee should adhere to the interpretation system followed in the Security Council, i.e. both simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, and that all documents, including the Committee's records, should be made available in the Russian language.

The CHAIRMAN reminded members that at its previous meeting the Committee had decided to be guided by the General Assembly's rules of procedure, subject to any modifications which might be rendered necessary by the special nature of the Committee and its work.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) wondered whether the Secretariat would have any difficulty in providing consecutive as well as simultaneous interpretation of the Committee's discussions.

Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) said the practice followed by the Security Council of having consecutive as well as simultaneous interpretations of its discussions required a large number of interpreters. The Secretariat could provide the two types of interpretation requested by the USSR representative when there were few meetings, but it would be extremely costly to do so when there was a large number of meetings.

Mr. LACOSTE (France) said that as the Committee of Twelve had been set up by the General Assembly it should follow the Assembly practice and use simultaneous interpretation only.

/ Mr. TSARAPKIN

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), referring to the statement of the representative of the Secretariat, failed to see why difficulties would arise if the Committee was serviced by consecutive as well as by simultaneous interpreters. Consecutive interpretation would enable members of the Committee to follow the statements and make sure that they were being correctly interpreted and to correct any errors, thereby assuring greater accuracy in the wording of the more important statements of representatives.

Mr. COULSON (United Kingdom) said that he was quite prepared to agree that there should be consecutive as well as simultaneous interpretation when matters of great importance were discussed. He felt, however, that it would be a waste of time and money for the Committee of Twelve, which was to deal with questions not of substance but of machinery, to be serviced by consecutive as well as simultaneous interpreters.

The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the USSR representative's proposal that the Committee should be serviced by consecutive as well as simultaneous interpreters.

The USSR proposal was rejected by 6 votes to 1, with 5 abstentions.

Mr. WEI (China), referring to the USSR representative's request that the Committee's records should be translated into Russian, asked that they should also be translated into Chinese.

Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) said it was the Secretariat's practice to supply documents in any of the official languages at the request of a delegation.

Although rule 36 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure said that summary records should be drawn up as soon as possible in the official languages, it would be impossible for the Secretariat to produce the summary records in Chinese and Russian as speedily as the records in the working languages, i.e. within twenty-four hours of the close of a meeting. Only the records which were printed, namely those of the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and of the Main Committees, were translated into all the official languages.

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) emphasized the necessity of making translations of records of all meetings available to all delegations at the same time, so that all representatives should be able to study them before the next meeting, as such records assisted representatives in their work. The records would lose their value if translations were delayed for three or four days.

It was the Secretariat's duty to service the meetings of all United Nations bodies and not to place any obstacle in their way. It should therefore make every effort to produce the records in Russian as rapidly as in the working languages. There were sufficient translators in the Russian Translation Section to be able to fulfil that task within the required time.

Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) said that although it would not be possible to distribute the Russian translation of the record within twenty-four hours of the close of a meeting, he thought it could be distributed in time to give the Russian-speaking representatives an opportunity of studying the record before the following meeting of the Committee.

Replying to Mr. WEI (China), who wished to be assured that the Chinese translation of the records would receive the same treatment as the Russian translation, Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) said that the Secretariat would do its best, but he doubted whether the Chinese translation of the records could be completed and distributed as soon as the Russian translation.

Replying to a question by Mr. QUEVEDO (Ecuador), Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) pointed out that Spanish was a working language of the Committee of Twelve and therefore the records were automatically translated into that language.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) hoped that the practice of having a verbatim record of the Committee's discussions kept on file in the Secretariat for consultation by members would be continued.

Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) said that by adopting the General Assembly's rules of procedure at its previous meeting the Committee of Twelve had automatically decided not to have verbatim records of its meetings.

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Although rule 55 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure laid down that verbatim records would be drawn up in the working languages, the General Assembly had decided at its second session that verbatim records should be provided only for plenary meetings and one of the Assembly's Main Committees. The Committee of Twelve was therefore not entitled to have verbatim records. Sound recordings of all meetings were kept on file in the Secretariat and were at the disposal of representatives.

Replying to a further statement by Mr. NASH (United States of America), who drew attention to the last sentence of rule 60 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, according to which other committees and sub-committees might decide upon the form of their records, Mr. PEISSEL (Secretariat) said that that provision had been overruled by the decision taken by the General Assembly at its second session.

Verbatim records had been provided for the first two meetings of the Committee as the Committee had not then decided by what rules of procedure it would be guided.

The General Assembly had taken a decision of principle in the interests of economy and the verbatim reporting staff had therefore been reduced to one team. While it might be possible to provide verbatim reporters to service the meetings of the Committee of Twelve, as that body would not hold meetings simultaneously with the Security Council, he felt that it would be dangerous to establish such a precedent.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) withdrew his proposal, in the interests of economy emphasized by the Secretariat representative and in the absence of a general desire to have verbatim records.

Mr. WEI (China) said that he did not wish to press the point he had raised, but felt he should point out that the Secretariat was continually urging economy at the expense of efficiency. When the Committee of Twelve had discussed the question of its rules of procedure, the representative of the Secretariat had not drawn attention to the difference, as far as the servicing of meetings was concerned, between the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and those of the Atomic Energy Commission. There was, however, a very important difference and the Secretariat's representative should have emphasized that fact.

The CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN said that as the Chinese and United States representatives had decided not to press the points they had raised, the Committee of Twelve would continue to be guided by the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

CONSIDERATION OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE 323RD PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 13 DECEMBER 1950 (496 (V))

Mr. NASH (United States of America), referring to the operative paragraph of the General Assembly resolution establishing the Committee, observed that while the Committee's task was relatively circumscribed, the Assembly's decision was of the greatest significance. It was an expression of the will of the United Nations to persist in seeking a solution of the armaments problem despite past failures. The United States position in that respect had been stated by President Truman before the General Assembly on 24 October 1950. He had declared that the will of the world for peace was too strong to permit the United Nations to abandon its efforts to find a solution of the problem; the Organization should not allow itself to fail by default; it must explore all avenues which might lead to fruitful results.

Accordingly, the United States delegation would shortly submit its views on ways and means whereby the work of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments might be co-ordinated. Those views would reflect President Truman's suggestion for the development of a comprehensive system of control of all national arms and armaments through a single commission and would give the United States' views on the status, membership and terms of reference of such a commission. It was to be hoped that all delegations would express their views on those matters.

The Committee should adopt as its theme the inspiring message delivered by the Secretary-General at its first meeting. Mr. Lie had declared that one of the greatest days in the history of the human race would be the day when the United Nations succeeded in lifting the burden of armaments from the peoples of the world as a first step in its efforts to remove the danger of war. The United States shared the hope he had expressed that the Committee would contribute to those efforts.

/To facilitate

To facilitate the Committee's work, Mr. Nash suggested that it might be useful if the Secretariat prepared a summary of the experience of the League of Nations in dealing with the problem of armaments. The lessons learned by the League might be used as guidance for the Committee.

Mr. ZINCHENKO (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that if the Committee so decided the Secretariat would do its best to prepare a working paper summarizing the League's experience, but it would require three or four weeks to complete the task.

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thought it premature to instruct the Secretariat to prepare a working paper on the activities of the League of Nations in regard to disarmament. The Committee should first decide whether the League of Nations' experience in the reduction and regulation of armaments would be of any real assistance to the Committee's work, bearing in mind the notorious complete failure of the League in that matter. The question of the prohibition of atomic weapons had of course never arisen in the League of Nations and there was therefore nothing on that subject in its archives which would yield anything. The Committee would not benefit by the League's experience. If the Committee was to avoid failure it should use that Organization's experience as a warning. The Committee should not follow in the League of Nations' footsteps but should trace its own path -- that of the United Nations.

The USSR delegation in the General Assembly had repeatedly warned against attempting to follow the path of the League of Nations in dealing with the reduction and regulation of armaments. Its views remained unaltered. The Committee should defer decision on the preparation of the working paper suggested by the United States representative at least until its next meeting.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) was willing to defer a decision on the question. In the light of Mr. Tsarapkin's observations, however, he felt more strongly than ever that a study of the League of Nations' experience in dealing with the armaments problem would be fruitful. By revealing the paths which had led the League to failure, it might help the Committee to avoid them.

Mr. TEIXEIRA SOARES (Brazil) supported the United States suggestion that the Secretariat should prepare a working paper on the League's experience. The document should, however, be a brief and clear synopsis rather than a detailed monograph requiring long research. The circumstance that the League had failed in its task should not prevent the Committee from benefiting from its experience. Moreover, the Secretariat's study should cover not only the work of the League on the reduction and limitation of conventional armaments but that of the United Nations in that field and in matters of control of atomic energy.

He saw no objection, however, to deferring a decision on the matter until the following meeting.

In accordance with the suggestion of the representative of the Netherlands that the Committee should await the introduction of a working paper by the United States before continuing the discussion, the CHAIRMAN stated that the date of the next meeting would be fixed by the representative of Brazil who would preside, in consultation with the representative of the United States.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.