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COMMITTEE OF TWELVE

(ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 496 (V))

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 25 May 1951, at 3 p.m.

CONTENTS: Adoption of the agenda
Consideration of the resolution adopted at the 323rd plenary
meeting of the General Assembly, 13 December 1950 (496 (V)).

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. TELXEIRA SOARES	Brazil
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. HOLMES	Canada
	Mr. WEI	China
	Mr. ALBORNOZ	Ecuador
	Mr. LACOSTE	France
	Mr. DAYAL	India
	Mr. LUNS	Netherlands
	Mr. SAVUT	Turkey
	Mr. TSARAPKIN	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. COULSON	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. NASH	United States of America
	Mr. NINCIC	Yugoslavia

Secretariat:

Mr. ZINCHENKO

Assistant Secretary-General in charge
of the Department of Security Council
Affairs

Mr. FREY

Secretary of the Committee

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

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

Mr. WEI (China) recalled that at its preceding meeting the Committee had decided to defer a decision on the question of preparation by the Secretariat of a working paper on the experience of the League of Nations in dealing with the armaments problem. He thought a decision should be taken on that question before the Committee proceeded to the consideration of the new United States proposal
+ (A/AC.50/1).

Mr. LUNS (Netherlands), Rapporteur, said that in view of the generally favourable reaction to the United States proposal for such a Secretariat study at the preceding meeting, he had discussed the matter with the Secretariat. Mr. Frey, Secretary of the Committee, had said that the Secretariat could produce, on short notice, a survey of the activities of the League in disarmament, taking into consideration the particular aspects of the problem which the Committee would wish to stress.

There were various ways in which the problem could be approached. One method would be that of a chronological and historical summary, on the following broad lines: (a) a general outline, containing the provisions of the Covenant, a description of the various commissions dealing with disarmament and an account of the Disarmament Conference; (b) a report on the first period, 1921-24, dealing with the Temporary Mixed Commission and the preparation of the Draft Protocol for the pacific settlement of international disputes; (c) an

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account of the second period, 1925-30, concerning the work of the Preparatory Commission and dealing also with the problem of security; (d) a review of the third period, 1932-37, covering the Disarmament Conference; and (e) a list giving relevant annexes to the previous subdivisions.

In addition, the Secretariat could prepare papers emphasizing the League's organizational techniques, stressing in particular the fields of (a) disarmament, (b) chemical and bacteriological warfare, and (c) the handling of military information.

With respect to the paper submitted by the United States delegation, Mr. Luns pointed out that it would be necessary for delegations to consult their Governments on the matter and the Committee might have to hold several meetings to complete its discussion. Their report would have to take account of all views put forward, and it was to be hoped that their discussions could be well advanced during the next month. There remained little time before the General Assembly and they had not yet made much progress.

Mr. WEI (China) thanked the Rapporteur for his very helpful statement. He thought that both types of study would be most useful but he hoped that their preparation would not impede the valuable work of compiling bibliographies on atomic energy matters, on which the Secretariat was engaged. The documents to be prepared should be as concise as possible, and a bibliography of the most important documents might be included.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) joined the Chinese representative in commending the Rapporteur for his constructive approach to the problem. He proposed that the Rapporteur should be authorized to work out the details of the suggested studies in collaboration with the Secretariat.

/Mr. TSARAKIN

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that at the previous meeting his delegation had objected to the preparation of a document summarizing the experience of the League of Nations. It had drawn attention to the fact that the League's experience was irrelevant even from a procedural standpoint, since it included nothing relating to the atomic weapon. The prohibition of that weapon was the essential task of the Atomic Energy Commission, and the task had not yet been accomplished.

The League of Nations had not dealt with the question of the prohibition of the atomic weapon. The Committee had therefore nothing to learn from it and no useful purpose would be served by summarizing its experience.

The League's experience in disarmament was of no greater value. It had had experience in that field, but its experience had been negative. After seven years' work the Disarmament Commission had not even succeeded in drawing up a list of the types of armaments which should be subject to limitation. It had never reached the stage of practical measures. The United Kingdom and France had steered the organization into futile discussions of the level of armaments -- the same subject which the representatives of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France had brought up at the Preliminary Conference of the Deputy Foreign Ministers in Paris in 1951 -- but had made no effort whatsoever to undertake practical measures for the limitation of armaments or armed forces. The proposals submitted by the USSR delegation, which might have provided a practical basis for the accomplishment of that task, had been rejected.

The League's experience had been completely negative.

The task of the Committee of Twelve, as laid down in General Assembly resolution of 13 December 1950, was to consider the co-ordination of the work of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments. The League's experience had no bearing on that task. The Committee of Twelve had also been requested to consider the advisability of merging the two Commissions. There again, the experience of the League was irrelevant. The tasks assigned to the Committee did not in any way call for a study of the League's unsuccessful experience. The preparation of a summary of its experience was unnecessary and pointless. No useful purpose would be served by burdening the Committee or the Secretariat with unnecessary and useless work. The proposal to prepare such a summary was merely a means of giving public opinion the misleading impression that the Committee was taking some action.

Mr. NASH

Mr. NASH (United States of America) admitted that the League's experience had had largely negative results, as had that of the United Nations in the same field. Nevertheless, there must have been much valuable discussion during the League's meetings, discussion with which most members of the Committee were probably not familiar. Accordingly, he maintained his view that a knowledge of the League's experience would be of value if only by saving the Committee from repeating some of the League's mistakes. He therefore put his proposal, made at the third meeting of the Committee, in the form of a motion and asked that it should be put to the vote.

In reply to a question from Mr. WEI (China), Mr. NASH (United States of America) stated that, under the terms of his proposal, the Rapporteur would be authorized to work out the details of the papers with the Secretariat, and the Secretariat would be instructed to proceed with the preparation and production of the papers with a view to their early presentation.

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the United States representative had argued in support of his proposal to prepare a summary of the League's experience that the work of the Rapporteur and the Secretariat in compiling it would be of value to the Committee in its search for a correct solution. He drew attention to the General Assembly resolution of 13 December 1950 which said that the Assembly "Decides to establish a committee...to consider and report to the next regular session of the General Assembly on ways and means whereby the work of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments may be co-ordinated and on the advisability of their functions being merged and placed under a new and consolidated disarmament commission."

The resolution clearly specified the two tasks which the General Assembly had assigned to the Committee. It was difficult to see how the League's experience had any bearing either on the co-ordination of the work of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments or on the desirability of merging the functions of the two Commissions. In both cases the Atomic Energy Commission was involved. The League's experience in the atomic question could, however, hardly be of value, since it was a well known fact that the League had never dealt with the problem, that its archives did not contain a line about the atomic question and that the problem did not in fact exist at the time of the League

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In the circumstances, it might well be asked what the League's experience could contribute to the consideration of ways and means of co-ordinating the work of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments or to the question of merging the two Commissions. Obviously, nothing. The USSR delegation therefore opposed the proposal to prepare a summary of the League's experience. No useful purpose would be served by burdening the Secretariat with unnecessary work, which would merely create the illusion that the Committee was taking some action. Such action would in fact be pointless and futile and would have no bearing on the tasks assigned to the Committee by the General Assembly. It would merely distract the Committee's attention from the fulfillment of the tasks assigned to it and would take up its time in unnecessary and futile work.

The United States proposal was adopted by 11 votes to 1.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) read the substantive parts of document A/AC.50/1, which summarized the organization and functions of a proposed new Commission for the Control of Armaments and Armed Forces, to replace the two existing commissions. Although intended to be no more than an outline, the document was clear enough and did not require detailed explanation.

He wished, however, to explain why his Government had proposed the establishment of a new forum for disarmament discussion at the present juncture.

There was no real inconsistency between that initiative and the large sums his country was spending on foreign military assistance. His country's programme was aimed at peace, not war, and had in fact been recommended the day before to Congress by President Truman "as another vital step along the road to real security and lasting peace". The struggle in Korea was making it clear that the principles of the Charter would be upheld and that aggression would not be tolerated. If any would-be aggressors could be convinced of that determination without having to go through the terrible waste and destruction of another world war to learn the lesson, then we might be approaching the day when we could concentrate on the task of putting an end to that costly business of having to maintain ourselves in the status of an armed camp. Practice seemed to show that the present efforts towards collective security were necessary in order to set the stage for the ultimate achievement of real progress towards disarmament.

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At the close of the Second World War the United States had hoped that disarmament would be an automatic consequence of the demobilization of the Allied forces, and at the very beginning of the first General Assembly it had urged the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission for what it had considered the far more pressing problem of the control of atomic energy, so as to ensure its employment for purposes of peace rather than war. It was also hoped that the problem of disarmament in the related field of armed forces and non-atomic arms would be solved by the rapid demobilization of the allied forces. As his country had been the only one known to be in possession of the atomic bomb at that time, such an attitude could hardly be attributed to selfish aims.

Later, however, in view of the failure of nations to achieve a satisfactory reduction of their armed forces and non-atomic armaments through voluntary demobilization, it had been decided to set up the Commission for Conventional Armaments, a separate body which would not interfere with the progress the Atomic Energy Commission was then making in developing a plan for the control of atomic energy. The Atomic Energy Commission's successful development of a plan of control, which in 1948 had won the approval of the great majority of the United Nations, and had been reaffirmed by the General Assembly each succeeding year, had borne out the wisdom of that arrangement.

Although the Commission for Conventional Armaments had made somewhat less progress, both Commissions had proceeded far enough with their work to demonstrate the possibility of developing a comprehensive system of armaments control that would be both safe and practicable.

It had been recognized from the outset that any system eventually developed would have to be comprehensive, embracing all types of armed forces and all weapons and instrumentalities of war, and that the work of the two Commissions would at some stage have to be co-ordinated under a comprehensive system of control. The stage had now been reached at which we should consider ways and means for initiating the requisite co-ordination and expansion into a comprehensive control system. The proposed establishment of a new combined commission had also the important purpose of offering a way out of the impasse in the two existing Commissions.

The United States had, of course, no delusions as to the possibility of resolving fundamental disagreements by a procedural device. It hoped, however, that the demonstration by the peace-loving nations of their determination to stand together against further aggression might bring about a change. The availability of a new and fresh forum would then be of real advantage.

/Mr. TSARAPKIN

Mr. TSARAPKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) wished to comment briefly on the statement made by the United States representative and on the United States proposal for the creation of a single commission.

The United States representative had himself admitted that his proposal was purely procedural and that it was not likely to bring the Commission out of the existing impasse. If that was so, he could see no need for the proposed procedural change. He wondered what was the reason for that organizational change, what results it would give, whether it was necessary and whether its aim was to provide a genuine and not merely alleged solution to the problems of the prohibition of atomic weapons and the reduction of armaments. The answer to all those questions could only be negative. As was well known, there was a General Assembly resolution of 14 December 1946 and it should be implemented. The failure of the United Nations to agree on the prohibition of atomic weapons and the reduction of armaments was not due to the existence of two commissions -- the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission for Conventional Armaments -- but to the fact that the United States, supported by a few other countries, was undermining the implementation of the decisions taken by the General Assembly on 14 October 1946 regarding the need to prohibit atomic weapons and carry out a general reduction of armaments.

During the previous five years, the position of the United States on that question had been in direct contradiction with those decisions. By adopting that attitude, the United States had brought the Atomic Energy Commission and the Commission on Conventional Armaments into an impasse. In that connexion, he wished to draw attention to the fact that the "new" proposal did not really contain anything new and that part "C" of that proposal, dealing with the functions of the "new single commission", again put forward all the old, unacceptable and inconsistent proposals of the United States. When explaining why his delegation was submitting those "new" proposals, the United States representative had naively stated that their aim was to further the cause of peace and the prohibition of atomic weapons. He had now said that the submission of such proposals might seem somewhat paradoxical in the light of Truman's message, which contained a request for an appropriation of many thousands of millions for military aid to foreign states. In fact, there was no paradox, since both Truman's latest message and the "new"

/United States

United States proposals pursued but one aim -- war. The aim of the United States proposals was not to reach agreement; it was to prolong the deadlock. The United States representative said that it was necessary to instil new life into the work but had immediately afterwards observed that procedural measures would not change anything. The United States document stated that the United Nations plan would serve as a basis for any other plan. That meant that the United States still pressed for its old, unacceptable and inconsistent proposals, which had kept the Atomic Energy Commission in an impasse for the past five years.

The aim of the United States in proposing the establishment of a new single commission was only to create the impression that some attention was being paid to the questions of the prohibition of atomic weapons and of the reduction of armaments and armed forces, and by so doing to conceal its stubborn opposition to the implementation of the General Assembly resolution of 14 December 1946.

That was made clear, first of all, by the United States proposal that the single commission should adopt as the basis for its work on the atomic question the outdated, inconsistent and unacceptable "Baruch-Lilienthal-Acheson plan" which events themselves had buried long ago, and which in fact was responsible for the deadlock reached by the Atomic Energy Commission. It was also made clear by the fact that in its "new" proposals the United States still repeated its threadbare considerations on "guarantees" and "stages". Together with the United Kingdom, it had used them for five years now in an attempt to sabotage and delay the urgent task of the United Nations to work out practical measures for the prohibition and control of atomic energy and the reduction of armaments. By so doing, it had brought the two Commissions into an impasse. In the light of those considerations, the USSR delegation was opposed to the proposal for the creation of a new commission.

Mr. WEI (China) said it was plain from the remarks of the USSR representative that difficulties could not be solved by procedural means. He was gratified that the United States emphasized that the work of the new commission was to build upon the work already done by the two existing Commissions. For further development of the United Nations plan for atomic control, it was necessary to consider them in the light of the problems of general disarmament.

/Certain

Certain questions were raised by the United States proposals upon the organization and functions of a new commission. Mr. Wei suggested four questions for consideration by the members of the Commission, including his own Government. First, there was the matter of the six-power consultations, which might usefully be continued with a view to finding a basis for agreement on atomic energy control as well as on the control of conventional armaments. Secondly, the United States proposal did not explicitly provide for the inclusion of the terms of reference of the Atomic Energy Commission. That provision would show clearly the intention to plan for the elimination of atomic weapons from national armaments. Moreover, the United Nations plan had the positive aspect of co-operative international development of peaceful uses of atomic energy, and the United States proposals should be broad enough to include that possibility.

Thirdly, the United States proposal provided for technical advice of a kind which could be taken for granted. What it might be desirable to provide for was expert testimony from states not members of the proposed commission, whose achievements in any related field made their participation profitable.

Fourthly, the provision for periodic progress reports might imply that the whole system would have to be agreed upon before any action was taken. Mr. Wei suggested that it might be possible to advance by stages as agreements were reached. He hoped the proposal would not exclude progressive action.

Mr. NASH (United States of America) thanked the Chinese representative for his useful comments, which raised questions requiring careful consideration.

Replying to the USSR representative, he said that he regretted the USSR delegation's lack of support for an idea which that delegation had so strongly advocated in the past, at a time when the United States delegation had been in favour of two separate commissions.

He apologized for the fact that his delegation had not been able to produce the present paper sooner. He appreciated that governments would have to be consulted and said that his delegation would welcome any comments.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the next meeting would be convened by the Canadian representative, who would succeed him in the Chair.

He agreed with the United States, Chinese and Netherlands representatives as to the importance of, and need for, representatives to consult their governments.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.