



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 3RD MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/C.1/34/1)

The CHAIRMAN: The Bureau of the First Committee has met and decided on a suggested programme of work that I shall introduce at this time.

At the outset, may I draw the attention of the Committee to document A/C.1/34/1, dated 24 September 1979, containing the letter dated 21 September 1979 addressed to me by the President of the General Assembly and informing me that the General Assembly, at its fourth meeting, decided to allocate 20 items to the First Committee.

In order to be able to submit a work programme to the First Committee for approval by all members of the Committee, I have taken particularly into account the time limitation the Committee faces.

According to established practice, the First Committee will begin its substantive work only after the end of the general debate in the plenary Assembly, scheduled for Friday, 12 October 1979. On the other hand, the Committee should not go beyond the cut-off date suggested by the President of the General Assembly, that is, 7 December 1979. These limitations leave the Committee with a period extending from 16 October to 7 December 1979, during which it should be able to cover its rather heavy work-load.

The Committee will have at its disposal a maximum of 76 meetings in which to consider the items before it.

May I suggest to the Committee that we first take up items relating to disarmament, namely, items 30 to 45 and items 120 and 121 of the session's agenda. With respect to these items, I should like to make it clear that it is my intention to follow the practice that has been accepted by the Committee in past years, namely, that delegations may address themselves to each or all of the disarmament items in the order they deem appropriate during the general debate.

(The Chairman)

Any delegation may start with any of the items on disarmament, regardless of the order in which they appear. Not only may delegations speak on the items in the order in which they wish, but they may also make more than one statement. This is the practice the Committee followed in past sessions, and I believe it is the one that is most productive. Delegations have before them a breakdown of the suggested programme of work and time-table.

For the consideration of these items, I would propose the allocation of 60 meetings during the period from 16 October to 27 November - which should be rather a reasonable time for consideration of them.

I should also like to indicate that, out of the 60 meetings, 30 will be allotted to a general debate, and the remaining 30 to the consideration of and action upon all draft resolutions under these items. The deadline for submission of draft resolutions would be 16 November. Representatives are invited especially to submit draft resolutions with financial implications at the earliest possible time.

The Committee will then take up agenda item 122, namely, "Settlement by peaceful means of disputes between States", and I propose the allocation to it of four meetings during the period from 28 November to 29 November, but if additional meetings were necessary appropriate arrangements could be made accordingly.

During the last week of the Committee's work, that is, from 30 November to 7 December, we could deal with agenda item 46, namely, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", in 12 meetings. Thus we would dispose of all the items allocated to the First Committee within the available time.

May I take it that the Committee agrees with the suggested work programme and time-table?

Mr. VUKOVIC (Yugoslavia): Sir, my delegation entirely shares the views you have expressed with regard to the general approach to and organization of the work of the Committee. However, I feel that in the allocation of the items, no particular emphasis has been given to agenda item 42, "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session", which appears as item 13 in the list contained in document A/C.1/34/1. If I remember correctly, we had decided to give special attention to the implementation of the

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recommendations and decisions adopted at the tenth special session, and at last year's session we had emphasized in this Committee that a certain number of meetings should be allocated to that item. My delegation would like to see the First Committee again allocate a given number of meetings to it.

I am not asking that the time-table for a general debate be extended beyond the total of 30 meetings, but I feel that we could divide these 30 meetings into two groups in which emphasis could be given to the review of the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly at its tenth special session. I think that anyone looking at this item will see that it is not like any other item allocated to the First Committee. It consists of a number of very important points which cannot be compared with other items, and I feel strongly that this should be taken into account. Apart from other reasons, the feeling of my delegation is that by such planning we would maintain the standards we set last year with regard to the question of the implementation of the results of the special session, and we should not like to see them subordinated in the general debate where this emphasis would be in any way diminished. So I propose that we allocate to our thirteenth item, which is item 42 of the Assembly's agenda, a certain number of meetings within the over-all allocation of 30 meetings.

The number of these meetings can be discussed; I have no specific proposal, but we could be guided by last year's debate. If I remember correctly, we had about 80 statements last year on the item, and I feel that if we did not do the same this year we would in a way fail to meet the expectations of last year's General Assembly session and of the special session.

Mr. KALIANDA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, I am not questioning what you have just said regarding the organization of our work, but I do have a comment to make.

In the United Nations we do not use English only; other languages are accepted by the Organization. I was wondering why there is a trend to give us documents in English only, ignoring the other languages that are spoken and accepted in the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: The comment of the representative of Zaire will be noted.

Mr. PELAEZ (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): In line with the proposal of the representative of Yugoslavia, I should like also to propose that a certain number of meetings be devoted to consideration of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): My delegation agrees with the approach proposed by you, Sir, regarding the organization of the work of the First Committee. At the same time, I should like to say that, as is known, our delegation is introducing as an urgent matter to be taken up at this session of the General Assembly the question of the inadmissibility of the policy of hegemonism in international relations.

(Mr. Petrovsky, USSR)

Our delegation proposes to say at a forthcoming meeting of the General Committee that, in view of its urgency and importance, this question should be taken up either in the plenary Assembly or in the First Committee. If the General Committee should decide to allocate it to the First Committee, we should then like to be able to set forth our position on it at the very beginning of the First Committee's work, so that other delegations might be able to familiarize themselves in more detail with the substance of our proposal before the discussion of the item begins in the Committee.

On that understanding, we would go along with the organization of work which you have just suggested.

Mr. BELISBOURG (France) (interpretation from French): I should like, on behalf of the delegation of France, to say that we hold the same view as that of the delegation of Zaire with regard to the working documents and the languages that should be used.

As far as the general organization of our work is concerned, the delegation of France is for the most part satisfied with the general plan which has been proposed, but we have a few reservations regarding the number of meetings to be assigned to agenda item 122, "Settlement by peaceful means of disputes between States". This is perhaps a matter which should be introduced in this Committee but discussed in substance in another Committee.

Mr. TUMI (Ghana): We tend to agree with the delegation of Yugoslavia that the order in which it is proposed that we should take up our work would seem to give the impression that we are trying to play down the importance of the "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session".

We think that this is an item on which a number of follow-up actions are required, as may be seen from its sub-sections (a) to (i), and I agree that it would therefore be quite useful for us to give it special attention, so that delegations might be able to comment on the various reports which are before us regarding follow-up decisions.

(Mr. Tumevi, Ghana)

We therefore agree with the delegation of Yugoslavia that a specific number of meetings should be devoted to the discussion of this item. But of course we would not press the point unduly should a majority in the Committee feel otherwise.

Mr. VAN BUUREN (Netherlands): Our delegation also agrees with the programme of work which you have suggested to us, Mr. Chairman. It would seem to be a pragmatic one, and I should merely like to suggest, in the same vein of pragmatism, that when we reach the stage of discussing draft resolutions it might be worth considering whether we could take up together certain items that are closely linked. That might perhaps help us to save a little time and avoid our running out of time towards the end of our work as has happened in past years.

Mr. BUKETI BUKAYI MATULO BELE (Zaire) (interpretation from French): I was not present when a member of my delegation spoke earlier, Sir, but I in turn should like now to express our congratulations to you upon your election to the chairmanship of our Committee. We shall do so at greater length when we begin our work proper.

I have asked to be allowed to speak to support the proposal made by the representative of Yugoslavia, which has been seconded by Ghana. Zaire considers that the tenth special session marked a turning-point in the history of disarmament. We think that it would be regrettable indeed for our international Organization to take up the consequences of this without discussing as well other items which are usually on this Committee's agenda.

We would therefore urge the members of the Bureau to review and fully appreciate the importance of the results of the work of the tenth special session, so that we can have a fairly lengthy period in which to discuss that item. That is why we are counting on your co-operation so that that matter might receive due attention, because the non-aligned countries attach great importance to the results of that special session.

Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom): I should like merely to make a brief observation on the proposal of the representative of Yugoslavia, which has now been supported by several other delegations.

I do not think that any delegation here would dispute his analysis that item 13 of the Committee's agenda is very important or that the recommendations and decisions of the tenth special session were a turning point in the work of this Committee, and I believe that we should not forget that in deciding on the programme of work.

I just have one practical point. If one looks at the various sub-headings of item 13, one can see that they cover very wide ground, and that is inevitable. The final Document of the tenth special session was a comprehensive Document and touched upon all areas of disarmament. It is therefore inevitable that the recommendations and decisions of the special session should overlap in great measure many of the other traditional disarmament items which the First Committee has considered over the years and indeed produce several items which have been inscribed since the special session.

I think that there is a great danger that, if we divide the time rather rigidly between consideration of item 13 and consideration of other items, we shall run the risk of duplicating the debate, because delegations will want to make observations on subjects which will come up under both headings, and I do not believe that we should in effect give ourselves two general debates. I would urge that the Committee accept the programme as suggested by you, Sir, on the understanding that you will - and I am sure that we are all confident that you will - allow flexibility within the time period both for the general debate and for the following 30 meetings on the consideration of and action upon resolutions. I have no doubt that many delegations will wish to take up a good deal of their time during those two debates on making observations under item 13, but I suggest that we leave you, Sir, the flexibility.

(Mr. Fuller, United Kingdom)

If I could just make one further observation about the statement of the Soviet Union representative, I think it would be similar. We must, of course, await the decision of the General Committee on the inscription and allocation of the new Soviet item, but I am not sure that at this stage we should decide to give it time at the beginning of our debate. It is open to the representative from the Soviet Union and those from other delegations to place whatever emphasis they wish on any particular item in the course of the general debate.

Mr. MULLOY (Ireland). I wish to pay a tribute to our colleague from Yugoslavia. I think we all share his preoccupation that sufficient attention be given to the examination of the implementation of the decisions of the tenth special session, but at the same time I do feel that we must achieve some precise formula which we hope will be the label for the exchanges on disarmament items for the period indicated in the programme.

It is important to bear in mind that if we are to examine the results of the tenth special session separately we must do so in such a way as to imply that the Final Document of that session is such an all-embracing one that it covered and established in its present form the Committee on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. Therefore, the labelling of the title, as it could appear as the subject of our exchanges over the period to mid-November, could be "Disarmament" with a list of subheadings (a), (b) and (c). Under (a) we could have "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session", under (b) we could have "Report of the Committee on Disarmament"; and under (c) we could have "Report of the Disarmament Commission". Also, possibly, we could have a subparagraph (d), "Other disarmament issues". That formula could ultimately express the desire that you intended to imply, Mr. Chairman, in putting the draft programme before us, and would also take account of the consideration put to us by the Yugoslav representative.

May I also suggest -- again in a strictly personal capacity -- that it might seem unnecessary in producing the records of the First Committee to list on the first page all the items of disarmament as we have done in previous years. If we use a general label on the lines that I have suggested it might then be possible to follow the practice that has been adopted in the plenary Assembly

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of listing the speakers and the countries from which they come on the first page. That would facilitate the identification of speakers in the general debate from the copies of the verbatim reports as they come to hand. I put this suggestion to you, Sir. I do not know to what extent it might be possible to apply it, but it would certainly make individual copies of the verbatim records of the First Committee more intelligible, and also make it very much easier for us to find the statements of individual speakers.

The CHAIRMAN: There appear to be no further speakers on this particular issue, but I have before me three or four questions, and I propose to deal with the ones that are farthest removed from the substance of what we are trying to discuss.

First of all, I should like to say to the representatives of Zaire and France that the First Committee will try to have all documents published in the official languages used in the United Nations. I am not clear whether the representative from Zaire was merely referring to what I consider a non-working paper that had been issued with a suggested programme of work and a timetable, but in terms of documents-proper I assure representatives that all documents will be issued in the official languages used in the United Nations.

On the point put forward by the representative of the Netherlands, I think that his idea is very good - that if draft resolutions, wherever possible and especially when they are presented in time, can be grouped together that will help to facilitate the work of the Committee. This is one idea that we can look at and try to put into action.

I must tell the representative of the Soviet Union that the Chair cannot make any decision at this stage, especially as the item has not yet been presented to the General Committee. However, we would be willing to look at this if it is put to the First Committee, and try to work out a reasonable kind of plan for its presentation and possible debate.

Before we go into the question posed by the representative of Yugoslavia, supported by the representatives of Ghana and Zaire, I should like to give my definition of flexibility as far as the Chair is concerned. There is no doubt that it will be extremely flexible in dealing with the Committee's work.

(The Chairman)

However, flexibility has some form of elasticity. It can stretch to a certain point and then it must snap back. If it stretches too far it will break. I do not think that the Chair will be able to support all the ideas and views put forward, but it will be flexible to the point of accommodating any view presented by any individual delegation, especially if it is supported by the majority of representatives here.

The statements that I will make after we come to some decision on the adoption of a programme of work might help to clarify some of the questions raised earlier. At this stage I think the Chair might assume that the representative of Yugoslavia has made a formal motion to this Committee in terms of setting aside a certain time within the prescribed 30 meetings that we have scheduled for our general discussion. However the Bureau in no circumstances considered the idea of diminishing the importance of item 13 in our programme. Every consideration was given to the second aspect of our work - that is, to deal with the substance of resolutions, and I am pleased to hear that the representative of Yugoslavia himself agreed that there could be no special time set aside outside the limits of the 30 meetings that we have scheduled. I feel confident that if this work programme is adopted, the subjects under item 13 will be given special attention. However, I am in the Committee's hands, and if members feel that there should be a separate time set aside for item 13, I am willing to accept this and try to work out a slot into which it can be fitted. Therefore I ask the representative of Yugoslavia whether this is a formal motion that he is putting to the Committee, or just a suggestion.

Mr. VUKOVIC (Yugoslavia): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your explanation and your intended flexibility in so translating the programme of work in practice as to allow all delegations to dwell particularly on any item on the agenda of the First Committee. My proposal was a formal proposal to allocate a number of meetings to item 13, and I have tried to explain the reasons why my delegation feels that we should adhere to the practice of the thirty-third session. I thank delegations which have supported my proposal, and I hope that the Committee will agree with it.

(Mr. Vukovic, Yugoslavia)

I feel that the review of the implementation of the decisions of the special session is quite different from any other item. "Review" indicates that we are going to give particular attention to the item. And so, on that basis, I feel that we should review slightly the programme which you have proposed, Mr. Chairman, and allocate a number of meetings to this item.

The CHAIRMAN: Members have heard the formal proposal of the representative of Yugoslavia that we should set aside a certain number of meetings - even though we have not taken a decision on those meetings, which will probably be left up to the Chair and not, I hope, brought back to this Committee for approval - for dealing with agenda item 42. I shall put this to the Committee.

Mr. MULLOY (Ireland): I should simply like to ask our Yugoslav colleague what time does he envisage will be spent on matters which are not related to issues covered by the special session on disarmament, because the suggestion I made earlier was to have a single term, disarmament, and then to list as subitems the special session, the Disarmament Commission, the Disarmament Committee and then other matters. That type of suggestion, which I am not at this stage prepared to propose formally, would suggest that we do not attempt to divide the time between the actual consideration of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the special session and the questions of other items, because I think it is almost physically impossible to make a distinction between items which are not effectively consideration of the results of the special session and those which are.

My suggestion is therefore not to be regarded as a counter-proposal, but I would ask the Committee to consider it very seriously. If we adopted a proposal along the lines which I have suggested, we would not then have to set aside a certain number of meetings during which we would

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discuss the tenth special session, and other meetings during which we would not discuss it. I think the problems set and the institutions created by the tenth special session have had such significant results in the field of disarmament that it would be physically impossible to dissociate one from the other. I would therefore honestly suggest that we should not try to set ourselves the mathematical task at this stage of setting aside a specific number of meetings for review of the special session but, rather, regard it as a fundamental aspect of all our meetings on this specific subject. We could give attention to that if we listed, under the heading disarmament, (a), (b), (c), (d), as I suggested - one heading simply being for the special session and the others for the other developments in the area of disarmament over the past year.

Mr. VUKOVIC (Yugoslavia): I should simply like to suggest that if the proposal of our colleague from Ireland is acceptable my delegation would not object to its being adopted as a compromise. I believe that the emphasis which we intended to give to the results and decisions of the tenth special session is quite adequately reflected in it.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall take it, then, that the Bureau may work this out on the lines proposed by the representative of Ireland, and that this is acceptable to the representative of Yugoslavia and the representatives who supported his original proposal.

If there are no other questions with regard to the programme of work, the Bureau will have a meeting to take a decision in the sense proposed by the representative of Ireland. If there is no further comment, I shall take it that the programme of work is adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: At this point it would be fair for me to state that the programme of work which the Committee has just adopted foresees full utilization of the time available to us. With the exception of Thanksgiving Day, I believe that the Committee cannot afford to miss any one day's schedule of work.

(The Chairman)

At this juncture I should like to say that the efficient utilization of conference resources has long been of major concern to the General Assembly, as well as to all of us. I might also indicate that it has become much more important this year in view of the fact that, in addition to the Main Committees of the General Assembly, a number of working groups of various Main Committees and informal consultations by delegations on selected items are expected to require both interpretation services and conference rooms for their meetings. This, therefore, requires that the Committees should avoid the loss of time arising from late starting or early ending of meetings. To achieve that goal, I should like, with the co-operation of the members, to start the meetings of the First Committee punctually. This will enable us to avoid unnecessary waste of time. In order fully to utilize the time available, I will open the meetings of the Committee at 10.30 a.m. and 3 p.m. sharp, and will endeavour to close the meetings at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., as usual. It is my conviction that such a policy would also avoid the need to hold night and weekend meetings.

I shall convene meetings of the Committee only when there are sufficient numbers of speakers to ensure adequate utilization of available resources. The Bureau has agreed that no meeting should be scheduled for those days on which fewer than four delegations have inscribed their names.

In order to give ample time, and to avoid the rush - as I propose to call it - I open the list of speakers as from today for the members of the Committee to inscribe their names for statements on any item. I urge delegations to inscribe their names on the list of speakers before the Committee begins its substantive work. The list of speakers will be closed on 25 October at 6 p.m.

To facilitate the task of the Bureau of the Committee, as well as that of the Secretariat, members of the Committee should submit draft resolutions as far in advance as feasible, so as to provide sufficient time for consultations. The Secretariat has asked me to request members of the Committee to note that the draft resolutions, amendments and co-sponsorships must be given in writing to the Secretariat in order to

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avoid any possible misunderstanding. Requests for accommodation in and use of conference rooms for group meetings may also be given in writing to the Secretariat.

With regard to documentation, I should like to point out that the General Assembly has, over the years, adopted a number of resolutions on the control and limitation of documentation, containing measures designed to make the most effective and economical use of this vital but very expensive element of the service. These rules have been summarized in document A/INF/136/Rev.1. I would therefore, at the outset, request all members strictly to limit any requests for additional documents. As representatives are aware, this is necessary because of the tremendous pressures on the Secretariat during the General Assembly with regard to the preparation, typing, translation and distribution of documents. May I appeal particularly to members of the Committee to take these provisions into account.

(The Chairman)

It would also be appreciated if delegations could provide the Conference Officer with 12 copies of a speech when a prepared text is to be delivered. And although it may be unnecessary to make the following point, representatives are invited to speak slowly and clearly when reading out a prepared text and to face the microphone directly so that the interpreters and verbatim reporters will have the benefit of a sound which is as clear as possible. Adherence to these suggestions would certainly facilitate the task of the interpreters, who, I might add, often are required to make silk purses out of sows' ears. Most importantly, I must stress that clarity of sound will contribute to a high quality of interpretation and a more interesting statement.

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to rule 110 of the rules of procedure, which reads:

"Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the chairman of the previous session - or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation - after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

My predecessor Ambassador Pastinen of Finland, has been extremely generous in his congratulatory remarks to me and to members of the Bureau. I feel satisfied that he has expressed the sentiments of the Committee. I hope that rule 110, as well as other rules pertaining to the Committee's work and proceedings, will be strictly observed by all representatives, and that nobody will feel offended if the Chairman should stop them in the middle of congratulatory remarks.

I wish to emphasize a few other points to be observed in the deliberations of this Committee's work. I draw attention to document A/34/250, and, most important, to section II, regarding the organization of the session. The General Committee has adopted all the proposals contained therein and, although many have been observed from time to time, I wish to add that the provisions under paragraphs B, schedule and meetings, D, explanations of vote, J, the right of reply, and K, budgetary and financial questions, will be strictly enforced by the Chair.

(The Chairman)

The President of the General Assembly, Mr. Galim, who has so ably set the pace for the thirtieth-fourth session, has kindly requested all committee Chairmen to implement these rules. I am confident that the delegations in this Committee will cooperate fully.

Mr. LIAM (Kuwait): I wish to make just one comment on the methods you proposed, Mr. Chairman, for improving the efficiency of our work in this Committee.

I have noticed in previous years that whenever we have started a debate on any item, delegations have refrained from speaking in the earlier stages and that, as we advanced towards the end of the first week of the discussion and during the second week, we have sometimes had to listen to 12 speakers in the morning and 15 in the afternoon - despite the fact that in the first week many meetings have had to be cancelled or we have come here to hear only one speaker and then go home. This has resulted in both loss of time for delegations and loss of resources for the Secretariat.

I should like to suggest, Sir, that you allocate six speakers in the morning and six in the afternoon as a maximum for each day. In this manner, representatives would be compelled to speak earlier in the debate if they could not be accommodated towards the end, or they would refrain from speaking at all. In this manner we would avoid night meetings and not be burdened by having to listen to too many statements on one day while hearing very few on another.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Kuwait for his comments, which coincide with some remarks I made earlier. He has exceeded the number of speakers which the Bureau prescribed in saying that no meeting should be held if fewer than four representatives inscribe their names to speak and he has added an explanation of the cost to Members of the United Nations in terms of money and so on. We hope that in the light of this added information, representatives will inscribe their names and ensure that an adequate number are ready to speak at all times.

(The Chairman)

I must reiterate that the Chair has no intention of holding night meetings or week-end meetings and from this it should be clear that any representative who wishes to speak will have to inscribe his name to do so within the period from 10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. We hope to apply this very rigidly, as I think we must if we are desirous of making the important statements we have to make on the various items.

As I say, I appreciate the comments of the Kuwaiti representative, and I feel certain that his is the kind of suggestion which all members of the Committee would wish to put into effect.

If there are no further comments or remarks at this stage, I shall adjourn the meeting until 16 October 1979, when our first meeting to deal with substantive matters on the subject of disarmament will take place.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.