

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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3 July 1984
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 3 July 1984, at 10.30 a.m.

President:

Mr. V.L. Issraelyan

(Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria:

Mr. B. OULD-ROUIS

Mr. A. TAFFAR

Argentina:

Mr. J. CARSALES

Mr. R.R. HUBER

Australia:

Mr. R. ROWE

Mrs. S. FREEMAN

Miss J. COURTNEY

Miss S. BOYD

Belgium:

Mr. M. DEPASSE

Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil:

Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. TELLALOV

Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV

Mr. P. POPTCHEV

Mr. C. PRAMOV

Mr. N. MIKHAILOV

Mr. K. STANKOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

U HLA MYINT

U PE THEIN TIN

Canada:

Mr. J.A. BEESLEY

Mr. R.J. ROCHON

Mr. M.C. HAMBLIN

China:

Mr. QIAN JIADONG

Ms. WANG ZHIYUN

Mr. YANG MINGLIANG

Mr. ZHANG WEIDONG

Cuba: Mr. E. DE LA CRUZ
Mr. A. CURBELO
Mr. J.L. GARCIA

Czechoslovakia: Mr. M. VEJVODA
Mr. A. CIMA
Mr. J. MATOUSEK

Egypt: Mr. S. ALFARARGI
Mr. I.A. HASSAN
Ms. W. BASSIM
Mr. F. MONIB

Ethiopia: Mr. F. YOHANNES

France: Mr. G. MONTASSIER
Mr. H. RENIE

German Democratic Republic: Mr. H. ROSE
Mr. H. THIELICKE
Mr. W. KUBICZEK

Germany, Federal Republic of: Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. F. ELBE
Mr. M. GERDTS

Hungary: Mr. D. MEISZTER
Mr. F. GAJDA
Mr. T. TOTH

India: Mr. S. KANT SHARMA

Indonesia: Mr. N. WISNOEMOERTI
Mr. I.M. DAMANIK
Mrs. P. RAMADHAN
Mr. F. QASIM
Mr. I. WIRANATAATMADJA
Miss M.N. DARSA

Islamic Republic of Iran: Mr. N.K. KAMYAB
Mr. F.S. SIRJANI
Mr. H. RASOULIHA

Italy:

Mr. M. ALESSI
Mr. B. CABRAS
Mr. M. PAVESE
Mr. G. ADORNI BRACCESI
Mr. R. DI CARLO

Japan:

Mr. M. IMAI
Mr. M. KONISHI
Mr. I. AKIYAMA
Mr. K. TANAKA

Kenya:

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Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Ms. S. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO
Mr. P. MACEDO RIBA

Mongolia:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. S.O. BOLD

Morocco:

Mr. M. RMIKI

Netherlands:

Mr. R.J. Van SCHAIK
Mr. J. RAMAKER

Nigeria:

Mr. J.O. OBOH
Mr. L. AKINDELE
Mr. F.O. ADESHIDA

Pakistan:

Mr. M. AHMAD
Mr. K. NIAZ

Peru:

Mr. C. CASTILLO RAMIREZ

Poland:

Mr. S. TURBANSKI
Mr. T. STROJWAS
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. G. CZEMPINSKI

Romania:

Mr. T. MELESCANU

Mr. A. POPESCU

Sri Lanka:

Mr. J. DHANAPALA

Sweden:

Mr. R. EKEUS

Mrs. E. BONNIER

Mr. H. BERGLUND

Mr. J. LUNDIN

Mrs. A.M. LAU

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN

Mr. B. PROKOFIEV

Mr. P.Y. SKOMOROKHIN

Mr. V.P. PRIAKHIN

Mr. S.V. NAGRADOV

Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I. CROMARTIE

Mr. L.J. MIDDLETON

Mr. D.A. SLINN

United States of America:

Mr. L. FIELDS

Mr. R. SCOTT

Mr. J. MISKEL

Mr. A. HOROWITZ

Mr. B. MORTON

Mr. R. WATERS

Mr. P.S. CORDEN

Mr. A. LIEBOWITZ

Mr. M.G. MACDONALD

Mr. J.E. MCATEER

Mr. J.J. TIERNEY

Mr. C. WELLS

Ms. M. WINSTON

Venezuela:

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Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Ms. E. EGANGA KABEYA

Mr. O. GNOK

Secretary-General of the Conference on
Disarmament and Personal Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary-General of the
Conference on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to make a statement on the occasion of my assumption of the Presidency of the Conference.

As the Soviet delegation takes the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament, we would like to assure all the members of the Conference that we regard the important functions of the President with all due responsibility and will make every effort to achieve certain progress in the work of the Conference.

Let me express our gratitude to the distinguished representatives of Sweden, Mrs. Theorin and Ambassador Ekéus, who presided over the Conference in June. We highly appreciate the efforts to advance our work made by our colleagues who preceded us at the post of President.

Let me also extend our greetings to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador R. Jaipal. We place great hopes in his co-operation and assistance. This equally applies to his deputy, Mr. Vicente Berasategui, and all the rest of the Secretariat staff on whom the smooth functioning of this multilateral negotiating forum largely depends.

It takes no particular insight to realize that the Conference on Disarmament is going through one of the hardest periods in its history.

Having worked in its present format ever since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Conference has failed to produce a single agreement in this field. More than that, while the decision of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as its own rules of procedure, define the Conference as a negotiating body, we in this body have not yet been able to embark on specific negotiations on such urgent and pressing issues as the general and complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, prevention of nuclear war, cessation of nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, as well as prevention of arms race in outer space.

One also cannot fail to see that some issues that have become the subject of negotiations at the Conference are now actually deadlocked. I am referring first of all to such issues as the strengthening of security guarantees to non-nuclear-weapon States and the drawing up of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

The talks on the prohibition of chemical and radiological weapons also offer little hope for success. The latest developments on these issues hardly advance the negotiations towards mutually acceptable agreements.

(The President)

Having taken the floor as President of the Conference I will not elaborate on the causes behind such an unsatisfactory state of affairs at the Conference on Disarmament. Those causes are well known and have been exposed on repeated occasions and in all frankness during the work of the Conference on Disarmament by the Soviet as well as by other delegations. There is only one thing that I would like to note. The main cause of the stalemate or even backwards movement in the field of disarmament (and this is recognized by all) is the lack of political will on the part of certain States to end the arms race and to make headway towards real disarmament. Unfortunately, not everybody has so far learnt the simple truth that is so clearly formulated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, namely, that "the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today constitutes much more a threat than a protection for the future of mankind". Not only do the calculations on gaining a military and strategic superiority account for the futility of the efforts at ending the arms race but they also seriously threaten mankind with annihilation in the flames of a nuclear conflict.

Mankind is now facing a difficult and responsible moment in its history. The arms race is getting increasingly out of control, and new kinds and systems of weapons are being developed that it will be altogether impossible to limit, reduce or ban under adequately verifiable agreements.

Is there a way out of this situation? We are convinced that it can and should be found — and we have stated it repeatedly. But it takes more than just verbal assurances of peaceable disposition which are in no short supply nowadays. It takes practical measures that would show a readiness to refrain from confronting others with what has become or is becoming a fait accompli, measures that would express a genuine desire to reach mutually acceptable results. It is not negotiations for their own sake that are truly important but agreements that would put up barriers to the spiralling arms race, a willingness to achieve such agreements rather than use the negotiations as a cover for ever new programmes for building up weapons. Only given such goodwill does genuine progress at the negotiations become feasible.

This fully applies to the Conference on Disarmament as well. We cannot allow this multilateral negotiating body to go on marking time. It must finally get down to the task it was designed to fulfil.

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries consistently favour a prompt solution of all the issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. As emphasized in the declaration entitled "Maintenance of Peace and International Economic Co-operation" adopted by the supreme leaders of the member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance at the Economic Conference in Moscow in June this year, "there is no more important task today than the task of safeguarding

(The President)

world peace and averting nuclear catastrophe. Priority is attached to ending the arms race, moving to arms reductions and maintaining the military — strategic equilibrium at progressively lower levels".

It is the solemn responsibility of all the delegates of sovereign States present in this hall to justify the hopes still pinned on our work by the world public. These hopes, however, must not be abused. Practical deeds are required to justify them. So let us make every effort to finally overcome the deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament — while it is not too late.

On that note I will end my statement.

The Conference starts today its consideration of item 3 on its agenda entitled, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". However, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

You will recall that provision is made, in the time-table of meetings to be held this week, for an informal meeting of the Conference, if necessary. I believe that it will be useful to use the time available this morning to hold that informal meeting, so that the Conference might consider how to proceed with a number of organizational matters still pending. We could review the existing situation and look at the possibility of developing a programme of activities for the month of July, which would assist us in disposing of those questions. Accordingly, I intend to convene an informal meeting immediately after this plenary meeting is adjourned.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of the German Democratic Republic.

I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Rose.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): Mr. President, first of all, I should like to congratulate you, the distinguished representative of the fraternal Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of July. From the very beginning of its existence, the Soviet Union has vigorously pursued a foreign policy of peace and disarmament, which fully corresponds with the wishes of all peoples. This strategy of the Soviet Union's in international affairs is laid down in its very first foreign policy document, Vladimir I. Lenin's Decree on Peace. With the fortieth anniversary of the victory over fascism approaching, the peoples remember the decisive share the Soviet Union had in their liberation from fascist barbarism.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

Looking back on this historic event, one can understand even better why the USSR is in the forefront of the forces fighting for lasting peace and disarmament. It is an uncontested fact that there is no disarmament issue on which the Soviet Union has not made far-reaching proposals.

We have come to know you, Comrade President, as an outstanding diplomat, who at this Conference and in his previous assignments has served with great devotion and competence the cause of peace and disarmament. Let me express our profound conviction that under your skilled and experienced leadership the Conference on Disarmament will be in good hands. It is from the bottom of our heart that we wish you great success. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic will do its utmost to co-operate with you in the discharge of your duties.

Permit me, Comrade President, to express through you also the thanks of our delegation to Ambassador Theorin, Chairman of the Swedish Disarmament Commission, and to Ambassador Ekéus for their devoted work in presiding over this Conference in the month of June.

Three weeks after the beginning of the summer part of its session, the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to make headway in regard to the priority items on its agenda. Although the majority of delegations has made persistent efforts to overcome the deadlock, it has not even been possible to start negotiations on those issues. My delegation, therefore, shares the concern expressed in the statement of the Group of 21, which the distinguished representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Vidas, presented at the plenary meeting on 28 June. The root cause of the disturbing situation at this Conference is obvious. It is the lack of readiness on the part of some States to embark upon negotiations on items 1, 2, 3 and 5 on our agenda.

There is no more urgent task today than to avert a nuclear holocaust. Quite a number of proposals have been advanced to attain this goal. In this context, we attach a special importance to the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Such a step would not only bar further qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, but also build trust among States. It would be convincing proof of their intention to save mankind from a nuclear catastrophe and to stop the nuclear-arms race.

The advances in weapons technology must not foil disarmament efforts. In this connection, Mr. Erich Honecker, Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic and Mr. Olof Palme, Prime Minister of Sweden, were agreed during their recent meeting in the German Democratic Republic that weapons technology and armaments policies have already advanced to the point where the doctrines of deterrence, which contemplate the first use of nuclear weapons, put in jeopardy mankind's very existence. A general and complete ban on all nuclear-weapon testing would be a major contribution towards preventing such a perilous development.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

Recently, the member States of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance reaffirmed their readiness at their Moscow summit to conclude a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests without delay. In this context, I would also like to refer to the Joint Declaration in which the heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania stressed the urgent need to halt all testing of nuclear weapons.

In spite of all these appeals, in spite of many pertinent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty have not yet been started at this Conference. All the efforts of the overwhelming majority of the delegations present at this table have been in vain because of the resistance which some nuclear-weapon States are putting up against such negotiations.

During the spring part of our session, we were told by one side that there could be a possibility to go ahead with item 1 on our agenda. Now it has been proposed that specific issues relating to a comprehensive test ban should be examined.

It is not my intention to dwell in detail upon this suggestion. Even so, I would like to point out that a ban on nuclear-weapon tests has been a topic of different fora for more than 25 years. No other issue in the field of disarmament has been the subject of so much concern and study. Solutions to many problems relating to such a ban, including verification, have been offered in the trilateral talks and at this Conference. Last year, the Soviet Union and Sweden submitted to the Committee on Disarmament their draft treaties, which provide a sound basis for such negotiations. Hence, the lack of progress towards a comprehensive test ban is obviously not caused by insufficient examination of the issues connected with such a ban. No talk of so-called verification questions or the alleged need for creating conditions conducive to a nuclear-weapon-test ban can conceal this.

What is really lacking is the will on the part of some nuclear-weapon States to stop nuclear testing and to undertake correspondingly legally binding obligations. We are not aware of any change in the United States position expressed more than two years ago at this Conference to the effect that it regards such a step as a long-term goal. Also, the United States has not reversed its decision, made public on 19 July 1982, not to resume negotiations with the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom with a view to achieving a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. Moreover, it is no secret that the United States is presently engaged in a long-term nuclear testing programme to develop weapons for the "Star Wars" plan, as well as nuclear warheads for cruise missiles, the MX missile, and neutron and other weapons. Tests were also said to be necessary to ensure that the thousands of nuclear weapons the United States Administration proposes to produce in the next few years function properly when used, as is calculated, in a limited or protracted nuclear war.

How, under these circumstances, can the Conference on Disarmament seriously be asked to conduct mere discussions on a nuclear-test ban? Such an approach might entail that the Conference is used to cover up the lack of political will of certain forces to work out and conclude a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Like many others, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic is not prepared to take part in such a propaganda exercise. We should make sure that the peoples can appreciate fully the real situation in this area.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

At the beginning of this session, a group of socialist countries proposed in document CD/434 the establishment of an ad hoc committee, having a mandate for negotiations on a treaty to prohibit all nuclear-weapon tests. We expect from all delegations a similarly clear commitment to negotiations on a comprehensive-test-ban treaty. Only then will this Conference be able to embark upon fruitful work. Therefore, we would like to renew our appeal to the United States to review its position and to take part in negotiations on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

At the same time, my delegation welcomes the constructive attitude of the Soviet Union to the halting of all nuclear-weapon tests. Over the years, the USSR has not only favoured relevant negotiations. It has given substance to its will by concrete deeds, thus setting an example and living up to the obligations assumed under the Partial Test Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

By tabling quite a number of constructive proposals, the USSR has done its best to give an impetus to the CTB negotiations. Suffice it to refer to the readiness declared by the Soviet Union in the 1970s to agree to on-site inspections on a voluntary basis and to a moratorium on peaceful nuclear explosions. Moreover, in order to make quick headway, the USSR was ready to accept a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests to enter into force, even if not all nuclear-weapon Powers became parties to it initially. The conditions for negotiations would have been improved considerably if the Soviet Union's offer of a one-year moratorium on all nuclear explosions, made in 1980, had been accepted by the other nuclear-weapon States.

Unfortunately, this constructive approach did not meet with a similar response by the other side in this as well as in other cases. The trilateral talks were broken off, and the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the PNE Treaty, concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States in 1974 and 1976, have not been ratified.

Before I conclude my remarks, let me sum up the views of my delegation concerning item 1 on our agenda:

First, we share the concern expressed by many delegations with respect to the absence of negotiations on a comprehensive-test-ban treaty.

Second, there is no use in engaging in meaningless and non-committal discussions, which can be turned into a smokescreen for a lack of political will on the part of some countries to stop nuclear testing.

Third, we expect the nuclear-weapon States concerned to review their positions and to come out with a clear commitment to treaty negotiations, thus enabling the Conference to fulfil its mission as laid down in paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his statement and for the kind words addressed to my country and to myself.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

I give the floor to Ambassador Beesley of Canada.

Mr. BEESLEY (Canada): Mr. President, may I begin by expressing our gratitude, as you did yourself, to the distinguished representatives of Sweden, Mrs. Theorin and Ambassador Ekéus, who presided over our sessions in June. They did indeed direct our deliberations with patience and perseverance and with seriousness and skill. Where we made progress it was in some large measure due to their efforts. Where we did not, it was through no fault of theirs.

May I also take the opportunity of congratulating you personally, Mr. President, on your assumption of the important responsibilities you are now discharging. I have no doubt that you will utilize your well-known diplomatic skills to assist us in making progress in our work. You have already pointed out, quite accurately, that the importance of our work is not reflected in the progress we have been making. Others have made this same point and indeed, in my last two interventions, I have also stressed that while real progress, concrete progress, can only be made as a consequence of decisions -- sometimes difficult decisions -- in capitals, each of us has an individual as well as a collective responsibility to press ahead with our work if we are to avoid having the very credibility of the Conference on Disarmament called into question.

There may be, and indeed I suppose there are, different views as to which items should have priority over others. There really can be no disagreement, however, that world public opinion expects real, concrete action. Thus, while the process of negotiation is important, it is progress that is demanded of us. My delegation finds it somewhat ironic that the United Nations Disarmament Commission, from which many of us only recently returned and which is intended to be a deliberative body, has been engaged in an attempt at negotiations, while this Conference, which is intended to be a negotiating forum, appears to be involved in a rather leisurely process of deliberations, deliberations that may prove useful eventually, if we have that kind of time to spare.

Mr. President, surely we can do better.

The Canadian delegation has repeatedly stressed the importance and urgency of action on such issues as the comprehensive test ban, the arms race in outer space, chemical weapons and, more recently, the desirability of completing our negotiations on radiological weapons. In stressing the priority we attach to these questions, we do not denigrate the importance of other issues on our agenda. I do not propose, at this stage, to comment substantively on any of these issues, I shall, however, offer a very brief comment on the kind of approach we should be taking on all items on our agenda.

It is not the practice of the Canadian delegation to refer to newspapers as authorities for statements we deliver. This will be an exception because of the nature of the authority I propose to quote. Many of those here will have read the weekend edition of the Herald Tribune referring to the discovery of a new seventeenth century text of Grotius, found in the Netherlands. This particular document has a message that is as timely now as it was when it was written. The text found in the library of an Amsterdam church declares, if the newspaper report is correct, "instead of talking about things that separate us, we should concentrate on what binds us together".

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

In recent statements by the Canadian delegation here, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission and in public pronouncements by Canadian spokesmen at the political level, I think we have given ample evidence of an attempt on our part to do exactly that; to seek the common ground between East and West, between North and South, and attempt to expand it. This is the only point I wish to make today, I do not mean it in the sense of preaching at anyone, or lecturing to anyone, because we have to address this message to ourselves. But obviously we do not have the luxury of indulging in polemics, we do not have the luxury of detailed monologues about our respective positions. What I think we really must do is begin to utilize our time much more effectively, whether in general debates or in our other organs, to attempt to determine where there is common ground, and then seek to expand it step by step, no matter how modest each step may be. Where there appears to be no common ground then obviously that is a very serious situation which we have to seek to develop.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Canada, Ambassador Beesley, for his statement and for his kind words to the President. Does anyone else wish to take the floor? It seems not. I now intend to adjourn the plenary meeting but before doing so I would like to draw your attention to the fact that at our meeting today we have a very large group of servicemen from Italy. I wish them happiness and a life in peace. My deepest wish is that we should achieve our common goal of general and complete disarmament under strict international control and that the young people of all countries in the world would not have to wear military uniform.

I now intend to adjourn the plenary meeting and to convene an informal meeting in five minutes' time as announced at the opening of our plenary today.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 5 July, at 10.30 a.m. The plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.