

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

*Official Records**



FIRST COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 24 October 1984
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil)

CONTENTS

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

UN LIBRARY
1984 OCT 24
COLLECTION

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/39/PV.12
25 October 1984
ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

OBSERVANCE OF DISARMAMENT WEEK

The CHAIRMAN: Today marks the commencement of Disarmament Week and, as has been done in previous years, the First Committee is holding this special meeting in observance of that occasion. I have the distinct pleasure and honour, therefore, to welcome to the Committee this morning the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The observance of Disarmament Week affords all Members of this Organization an opportunity to recall their joint commitment to the common objective of disarmament and security. We live at a time when the gap between the powerful few and the powerless majority has never been so wide. That is why, in my view, the possibilities for progress within the multilateral framework are being increasingly overlooked by those who place their own interests and concerns above the interests and concerns of the international community as a whole. It is thus fitting that we take time on this occasion to reflect on the need to rededicate ourselves to the search for ideas and solutions within the aegis of the United Nations. Only in this way can we remain true to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter in discharging the mandate of the First Committee in keeping with the spirit of Disarmament Week.

I now have pleasure in calling on the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from Spanish): Disarmament Week, which we are gathered here to observe, coincides this year with the day on which we celebrate the thirty-ninth anniversary of the coming into force of the United Nations Charter. The first resolution of the first session of the General Assembly pertained to nuclear disarmament and since that time there has been no subject to which the Assembly has devoted greater attention. It is evident from the general debate of the current session of the Assembly that this attention has in no way diminished. The necessity of limiting armaments especially nuclear weapons, has been widely and emphatically reiterated. New ideas and proposals have been put forward and nations have taken advantage of the opportunity offered by the Assembly

(The Secretary-General)

to meet and exchange views. We must all hope that this will facilitate early progress in the ongoing negotiations and the resumption or the commencement of negotiations on matters which are of the utmost concern to the entire international community.

The responsibility for national security is common to all Governments. They also share, I believe, a common and urgent interest in meeting this responsibility with the least danger to the peoples of the world and the least jeopardy to the economic and social progress on which lasting peace so heavily depends. This is acknowledged in much that has been said and done at this session of the Assembly.

Yet it must be recognized that a greater degree of international confidence than exists at present is needed to facilitate real progress in arms reduction and limitation. I believe that this confidence can be encouraged through the greater understanding that emerges from exchanges of views such as those which have taken place within the framework of the United Nations in these past weeks. I should like to urge that they be pursued in this Committee where all Member States have the possibility to work together on an agenda which encompasses the broad range of disarmament issues.

The cost of arms continues to mount with the likelihood, according to some estimates, that the level of military expenditures will reach \$1 trillion in 1985. In mathematical terms - I should perhaps say astronomical - this figure exceeds the comprehension of many of us present here. It is clear none the less that even an approximation of that sum involves an enormous squandering of human and natural resources which, if directed to other ends, could be of great benefit to all mankind and, in particular, for the hundreds of millions of people still living in conditions of truly scandalous underdevelopment.

No progress in disarmament would be without importance. With each step forward, small though it may be, some growth in the confidence needed for the larger steps can be expected. For this reason, I would suggest that a concentrated effort might now be made to identify specific substantive measures on which, with renewed commitment, agreement could be reasonably expected at a relatively early date. The long impasse in arms negotiations must be broken. And the way must be opened for successful negotiations on nuclear weapons, which constitute the gravest threat to the security not only of one or several nations, but of the whole world.

(The Secretary-General)

Disarmament Week should serve to bring Governments and peoples - whether specialists or the public in general - to renew their efforts to find ways of overcoming the differences, both technological and political, which have stood in the way of progress. The time has also come to recall that the security of all nations can best be assured by common respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Therein lies the means to reduce dependence on military force, which will always remain the most stubborn obstacle to the comprehensive disarmament the Members of the United Nations have long held to be the ultimate and necessary goal.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Mr. Jan Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, who will read out a message from the President of the General Assembly.

Mr. MARTENSON (Under-Secretary-General, Department for Disarmament Affairs): The President of the General Assembly has asked me to convey to you the following message:

"For the seventh consecutive time since 1978, Disarmament Week is being observed by the international community.

"It is sad, however, that after all these years we are still confronted with the reality of a non-stop increase in the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race. There has been no improvement in the field of arms limitation and disarmament.

"The past year has unfortunately witnessed not only an interruption of some of the important negotiations between the two major Powers, but also a further deterioration in international relations. Relations among certain Member States of the United Nations have reached such a state of mistrust and tensions to the detriment of international co-operation as proclaimed in the Charter of the Organization.

"The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament states, rightly so, that 'nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization' and that 'it is essential to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race in all its aspects in order to avert the danger of war involving nuclear weapons.'

"The General Assembly and, in particular, its subsidiary bodies entrusted with its mandate in the field of arms limitation and disarmament should therefore endeavour to assist the nuclear-weapons States, particularly the two major Powers, in the task of achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament.

"However, it is not just in the area of nuclear weapons that the arms race has continued unabated. The question of conventional weapons and the fast pace at which their trade and transfer have been taking place must be seriously addressed. The complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction represent another urgent measure which must be achieved.

"Furthermore, it is shameful that in a world in which material, technical and human resources are urgently needed for development in all countries, military expenditures will have claimed over \$800 billion by the end of this year and will continue to rise.

(Mr. Martenson)

"It was almost 40 years ago that the founding fathers of our Organization resolved that they were determined not only to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, but also to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom and to combine their efforts to accomplish these aims. Much has changed in our world since then, but the Charter of the United Nations remains an inspiration to all of us committed to the betterment of mankind.

"The facts are all before us. We do not need any further evidence that the present accumulation of weapons, in particular nuclear weapons, no longer represents a protection but, indeed, is a threat to the future of our planet.

"Therefore, on this anniversary of the United Nations, and on this special occasion of Disarmament Week, I would urge all Member States to renew their commitment to the principles of the Charter and rededicate themselves to the objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

"The time has come for us to realize that, if we continue the arms race, we must also assume responsibility for contributing to the collective suicide of mankind.

"We, the peoples of the world here gathered, have a responsibility to the billions of fellow human beings who have put their faith in us to seek security in disarmament. Let us not disappoint them."

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Dinka, the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia and Chairman of the Group of African States.

Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia): At the outset let me pay a deserved tribute to all those ordinary men and women who, through the various peace movements all over the world, are striving to impress upon their Governments the imperative need and utmost urgency to put an end to the ever-increasing spiral of the nuclear arms race. Let me also pay an equally well-deserved tribute to all statesmen, political leaders, scholars and, indeed, all those whose policies, statements and writings have kept the burning issue of disarmament high on the agenda of the international community.

As we observe Disarmament Week this year, our thoughts - especially those of Africans, whom I have the honour to represent here - go to the millions of our compatriots who are confronted with the spectre of poverty and starvation as a result of the economic crisis engulfing Africa and the severe drought which is fast spreading to most parts of that continent.

(Mr. Dinka, Ethiopia)

While people in Africa are starving, the insatiable appetite of the war machines of the big and the powerful is fed with increased and more sophisticated nuclear-weapon systems. While our people are forced to live in ramshackle huts and makeshift tents, very secure and, indeed, comfortable shelters are being built to house and conceal nuclear missiles. While our people are denied the possibility and opportunities to learn the rudimentary elements of literacy, nuclear technology and know-how are being developed to the levels of devising "star war" weapon systems.

In short, billions are spent each year on the development, deployment and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, while millions of human beings are left to lead a life of deprivation, bereft of even the very basic necessities of life. Resources that could be used to save precious human lives are used, I dare say squandered, eventually to destroy mankind and his civilization. What an irony and what a waste! The world has, indeed, lost its moral compass.

The nuclear-arms race is depriving Africa, and, indeed, the whole world, not only of the necessary resources for development, but also of the confidence and optimism to face and meet the challenges of the future. The world today has enough nuclear warheads to destroy the world many times over. Can anyone say with any degree of certainty that those weapons will never be used? Throughout the ages, man has used all his inventions and creations. Is that also going to be the case with nuclear weapons? When nuclear weapons are possessed by a racist and terrorist régime, such as the one in South Africa, can anyone dare to assert that nuclear weapons will never be used? I submit that only uncertainty and grave concern can characterize our forecasts regarding the use or non-use of nuclear weapons.

The fate of humanity as a result is today in the hands of a few human beings leading the nuclear States. Even this, I am afraid, may not last long, for in a few years' time the very fate of mankind could well be totally at the mercy of the cold and mechanical calculations of computers.

(Mr. Dinka, Ethiopia)

The mad race for nuclear superiority, I submit, is thus threatening the world not only with catastrophe, but is indeed in the process of dehumanizing man and depriving our common civilization of its human and humane elements.

I say this situation is intolerable and untenable. This mad race has to be stopped and reversed. The call by the overwhelming majority of mankind for a nuclear freeze and for a commitment by all the nuclear Powers not to be the first to use nuclear weapons must, therefore, be heeded immediately.

As we commemorate this solemn occasion, let me on behalf of the African Group at the United Nations, reaffirm once again Africa's total and firm commitment to the noble and ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament and its determination to keep our continent free from all types of nuclear weapons.

Africa is convinced that, in this nuclear age, the fate of all States has become one and indivisible. In the calculations of the nuclear Powers, therefore, the entire world, as a unit, and the survival of humanity, must be placed above their individual national interests.

Finally, I appeal once again to all concerned to stop the catastrophic and costly nuclear race for the sake of the peace and well-being of the entire human race.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on Mr. Riyadh Al-Qaysi, the Permanent Representative of Iraq and Chairman of the Asian Group of States.

Mr. Al-QAYSI (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): I am greatly privileged to speak on behalf of the Asian Group of States at this special meeting celebrating for the seventh time Disarmament Week, which was proclaimed by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The issue of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, is accorded the highest priority, especially in view of the fact that our world has been deteriorating sharply. International relations are presently fraught with dangers and the world has been thrust once more into a state of cold war in which hotbeds of tension have proliferated and the principles of the Charter are being disregarded at a time when we need to adhere to them strictly. We are fully convinced that this unfavourable and dangerous climate renders the important work of achieving the desired goals of the comprehensive programme on disarmament more valuable than ever and also urgently requires the intensification and redoubling of efforts not only to resolve the chronic dilemmas facing humanity, but also to save life on this planet, which a handful of States have the capacity to destroy many times over.

(Mr. Al-Qaysi, Iraq)

The statements that were made in this Committee and during the plenary meetings of the General Assembly embodied the enormous fear resulting from the continuous deterioration in the international situation, on the one hand, and the escalation of the arms race and the increased waste of material and human resources on the other. We fully associate ourselves with this feeling of great danger.

The Asian group, in whose name my delegation has the privilege to speak, is fully convinced that international peace and security cannot be ensured without achieving complete and general disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, in all its aspects, under effective international control. Common sense strongly urges the renunciation of concepts proclaiming that security cannot be achieved except through military superiority, developing and stockpiling weapons of mass destruction - especially nuclear weapons - which threaten the whole of mankind with extinction. These untenable ideas tend to lend a more conventional character and to legitimize nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We call for an immediate ban on nuclear tests and the threat or use of nuclear weapons. We also reaffirm that the nuclear Powers must assure non-nuclear Powers that they will not threaten them or use nuclear weapons against them.

The Asian Group urges the creation of nuclear-free zones throughout the world and stresses the need to exert more efforts towards concluding international conventions prohibiting the development, production, use and stockpiling of chemical and radiological weapons, as well as other weapons and new systems of mass destruction.

Increased military expenditures, whether on nuclear or advanced conventional weapons which have enormous destructive capabilities, not only have serious and dangerous implications for the domestic economies of many countries but they also have far-reaching consequences for the developing countries that are already afflicted by severe economic crises.

At a time when we see the spectre of death and destruction looming over the ideals of the international community, as a result of our inability thus far to eliminate stockpiles of nuclear weapons on our planet, new steps are being taken that may lead to further obstacles being placed in the way of complete disarmament, because these steps will lead to the militarization of outer space through the introduction of new technologies and building defensive systems against nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Al-Qaysi, Iraq)

In conclusion, it behooves me to remind the Committee that what we have felt and witnessed thus far is a protracted debate on disarmament that is not commensurate with the modest progress that has been achieved towards that end. However, we are convinced that we can and must achieve the noble and humane objectives that preserve humanity and save it from the untold horrors which threaten it.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. David Meiszter of Hungary, who will make a statement in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. MEISZTER (Hungary): I wish to express my delegation's cordial congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election.

Today, at the beginning of Disarmament Week, which is part of the World Disarmament Campaign, I have the honour and pleasure of speaking as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

This year we are celebrating Disarmament Week in a somewhat pessimistic atmosphere that makes even the word "celebrating" sound a little bit out of place. The reason is that Disarmament Week is taking place after a frustrating period during which the international situation has become increasingly threatening, with the sinister prospect of another twist in the vicious spiral of the arms race.

With that as background, the original aims of launching the World Disarmament Campaign and commemorating Disarmament Week during every annual session of this Organization, namely, to make world public opinion aware of the increasing dangers of war and to generate widespread public understanding of and active support for the objectives of arms limitation and disarmament, are more timely now than ever before.

An objective analysis of the progress of the World Disarmament Campaign would undoubtedly reveal some directly perceptible and, of course, some indirect results. It is an undisputed fact that public opinion in different parts of the world has become more sensitive to the questions of war and militarization. But an objective analysis of the situation, with all due respect to the efforts made, cannot conceal the fact that during the same period the arms race spiral - promoted by the imperialist circles having a vested interest in it - climbed steeply upwards as never before. At the same time, there is an increasing awareness of the fact that the perspective of a nuclear showdown would certainly threaten not only the States directly involved, but also all countries, whatever their differences in size, level of development, social system and, eventually, even regardless of their geographical location.

It is with that in mind that the socialist countries of Eastern Europe have formulated the top priorities of their foreign policies on the wide array of disarmament issues. We are fully conscious that the whole range of disarmament questions facing the present session of the General Assembly, namely, the prevention of nuclear war, nuclear disarmament, prohibition of the militarization of outer space, reduction of conventional armaments, a halt to the introduction of new weapons systems, a ban on chemical weapons, a freeze and reduction of military expenditures, and the relationship between disarmament and development, are all of

(Mr. Meiszter, Hungary)

paramount importance for the future of the world and deserve our full devotion in our quest for their solution.

But, taking into account the special features of the time in which we live, we cannot but pinpoint two aspects as the absolute priorities of our policy concerning disarmament matters. We regard the prevention of nuclear war as the primary objective of our foreign policy, since there is nothing more dangerous for the future of humankind than an eventual nuclear catastrophe. Hence the array of measures such as the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons by all nuclear Powers, the quantitative and qualitative freeze of all nuclear weapons, the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones - measures which seem to us to be of extreme importance and of the greatest urgency with the aim of the eventual total elimination of nuclear weapons.

By the same token, we attach great importance to preventing the extension of the arms race to outer space. There are good reasons for that, but it seems to me that the time allotted to this forum does not allow a detailed explanation. That will undoubtedly be done during forthcoming days in the First Committee's topical deliberations. At this point, suffice it to say that the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and anti-satellite weapons in outer space envisaged by the Reagan Administration would seriously destabilize the situation and, coupled with the possession of nuclear weapons - contrary to what has been stated by some military circles - would make a nuclear conflagration imminent.

The task is urgent, because it is always easier to ban a system of armaments before, not after, it has become an irreversible reality.

At the beginning of this Disarmament Week, I wish to reaffirm that the Eastern European socialist countries are guided, as before, only by the desire to save mankind from a suicidal nuclear catastrophe and to spare the countries of the world a new twist in the arms race spiral. The time has come for practical steps in that direction.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Donatus St. Aimee, who will make a statement on behalf of the Chairman of the Group of Latin American States.

Mr. St. AIMEE (Saint Lucia): The States members of the Latin American Group have always actively supported all thoughtful and well-balanced disarmament proposals. We have always been of the view that our acceptance of and commitment to the Charter of the United Nations compel us to pursue urgently all avenues that

(Mr. St. Aimee, Saint Lucia)

may lead to general and complete disarmament, as is implicitly recognized in Article 26 of the Charter. We are appalled therefore that the arms race, both conventional and nuclear, that has spiralled and consumed millions of lives and billions of dollars since the Second World War continues unabated.

On a regional level, since 1967 we have made exciting progress aimed at ensuring that nuclear weapons are not introduced into our region within the purview of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and its Protocols. Conventionally, we are eagerly negotiating regional multilateral agreements designed both to eliminate all threats to peace and security and the reduction of military budgets.

Consequently, the States members of the Latin American Group support all the regional disarmament proposals. Since 1971 we have supported the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and deeply regret that serious difficulties among the parties most concerned continue to thwart its implementation.

We believe that the nations of the world have taken some significant, though not substantial, steps towards disarmament, such as, for example, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the strategic arms limitation agreements. But recent reports of the use of biological and chemical weapons and the inability of the parties to the intermediate-range nuclear forces and strategic arms reduction talks to resume negotiations cause us some great concern.

It is therefore our intention vigorously to pursue all possibilities for disarmament, not only in our own region but also universally, until mankind has realized a peaceful, safe and secure world.

A fifth of the States of that region have no standing army, and we are all aware of the relationship between disarmament and development, noting that funds used on arms are funds lost for development. In this respect, we urge all States to give priority to peace initiatives, development programmes, and the gradual reduction of arms so that the vast resources of our planet can be used for the enjoyment of mankind rather than for its destruction.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Anders Ferm, Permanent Representative of Sweden and Chairman of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. FERM (Sweden): It is an honour for me to address the First Committee on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States today when we mark not only the anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations but also the beginning of Disarmament Week.

Disarmament Week was instituted by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Permit me to quote the opening paragraph of the Final Document adopted by consensus at the first special session. It reads as follows:

"The attainment of the objective of security, which is an inseparable element of peace, has always been one of the most profound aspirations of humanity. States have for a long time sought to maintain their security through the possession of arms. Admittedly, their survival has, in certain cases, effectively depended on whether they could count on appropriate means of defence. Yet the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today constitutes much more a threat than a protection for the future of mankind. The time has therefore come to put an end to this situation, to abandon the use of force in international relations and to seek security in disarmament, that is to say, through a gradual but effective process beginning with a reduction in the present level of armaments. The ending of the arms race and the achievement of real disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency. To meet this historic challenge is in the political and economic interests of all the nations and peoples of the world as well as in the interests of ensuring their genuine security and peaceful future." (A/S-10/4, para. 1)

In paragraph 18 of the Final Document it is stated:

"Removing the threat of a world war - a nuclear war - is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Mankind is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation." (ibid., para. 18)

This call for disarmament was made in 1978. It is equally valid today, six years later, and in fact we are not any closer to the goal that was set out in this Final Document.

A well-informed public is of great importance for the promotion of the process of disarmament. Disarmament Week was instituted to respond to the legitimate concern for involving the people of our countries in the disarmament efforts.

(Mr. Ferm, Sweden)

At a time when public opinion is showing increasing concern over the dangers to peace and the lack of progress in the field of disarmament it is important to ensure a flow of information to our citizens on developments with respect to disarmament. It is in this perspective that the observance of Disarmament Week ought to be seen. It should help to unite the international community in the search for ways to reduce the military arsenals. No effort should be spared in the cause of disarmament.

The members of the Group of Western European and Other States pledge their full support for the United Nations and its Charter, which provide the basis for the maintenance of international peace and security and disarmament, and they reaffirm their support for all efforts which are conducive to progress in this field.

The CHAIRMAN: We have heard all the speakers scheduled to speak today and I thank them and, through them, their respective regional groups for their co-operation in the celebration of Disarmament Week.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.