



## General Assembly

UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS  
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GENERAL

A/CN.10/PV.103  
9 May 1986

ENGLISH

### DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

#### VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 5 May 1986, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. WEGENER

(Federal Republic of Germany)

- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. ABDEL WAHAB (Egypt): My delegation, Sir, is very pleased to see you in the Chair, guiding our work. Your well-known contributions in the field of disarmament give us every reason to believe that under your leadership the Commission will be able to achieve concrete and positive results. I should also like to congratulate all the other officers of the Commission who have been elected to assist you in your difficult assignment. My delegation pledges its full support to you and the other members of the Bureau in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Let me at the outset express on behalf of my Government our sincerest condolences and sympathy to the Government of the Soviet Union on the terrible accident. We are most hopeful that the trauma it has caused will be overcome by the diligent efforts of the Government of the Soviet Union.

We are also pleased to see that the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency is now in Moscow at the behest of the Government of the Soviet Union. In seeking the advice of that international agency on the unfortunate accident, the Soviet Government has given a clear example of its seriousness in tackling the problem.

I shall demonstrate the sincerity of my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, by accepting your request to all delegations that statements be directed to the agenda.

We feel it imperative that the present session of the Commission adopt concrete and practical measures to lend support to the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement on the agenda item regarding the prevention of nuclear war. The

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peril we face is immediate. We cannot afford to wait, since in this age of nuclear weapons every day is in fact a borrowed day. It is for that reason that my delegation is of the view that agenda item 4 (a) and (b) must continue to occupy the priority attention of our deliberate body. The Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries, in their meeting in Luanda on 7 September 1985 and just a few weeks ago in Delhi, reiterated their concern over the adverse effects of the arms race, and in particular the importance of an early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban Treaty.

The Seventh Non-Aligned Summit Conference held in Delhi strongly emphasized that the renewed escalation in the nuclear-arms race, in both its quantitative and qualitative dimensions, as well as reliance on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, has heightened the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war and led to greater insecurity and instability in international relations. Nuclear weapons are more than weapons of war: they are instruments of mass annihilation. The Heads of State or Government therefore found it unacceptable that the security of all States and the very survival of mankind should be held hostage to the security interests of a handful of nuclear-weapon States.

Unfortunately, the Disarmament Commission meets at a time when the failure of more than two decades of negotiations to result in tangible and meaningful agreements on disarmament is dramatically highlighted by an unbridled arms race between the two super-Powers. The Commission itself has recognized that "the increase in weapons, especially nuclear weapons, far from helping to strengthen international security, on the contrary, weakens it". Yet, we in the Disarmament Commission have not succeeded in the last eight years in agreeing on consensus language dealing with recommendations for item 4 (a) and (b), which encompasses in

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its outline all aspects of the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. We suffer, alas, from the ramifications of the lack of political will on the part of those States which are also stifling the progress of the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva dealing basically with the same content of the compilation of proposals for recommendations on agenda item 4.

Should we therefore give up our efforts to reduce and reverse the arms race in all its aspects and accept what many arms control experts appear to agree to say these days -- as for example, Leslie Gelb's frank and gloomy assessment that "arms control has essentially failed", that "decades of United States-Soviet negotiations to limit arms competition have done little more than to codify the arms race"? No, for we lately saw a glimmer of hope last September 1985 in the success of the Third Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in issuing a Final Declaration by consensus which presented the international community with the only successful outcome of a meeting dealing with a legal instrument on disarmament. This was the result of the determined political will of States party to the Treaty not to see it founder.

Yet on the other hand, nuclear and militarily significant States of the military divide are still treating the rest of the world to scenarios of military postures and preparedness which have always implied that only when the boat of their balance of power is rocked must international efforts be involved to put the boat back on course. These same countries have made the point that the concept of nuclear deterrence, which is itself based on the theory of mutually assured destruction capability, has in the main been responsible for the avoidance of nuclear war. While the deterrence theory is fraught with danger because of advances in military technology and the vagaries of technological break-throughs, one must submit that such concepts as those of equal security, flexible response,

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limited nuclear war, winnable nuclear war, closing the window of vulnerability, and the extension of the arms race into outer space not only accentuate the arms race but make the outbreak of nuclear war a threatening reality.

A very recent study published after a symposium on the medical implications of nuclear war, taking into consideration the latest incident, confirms beyond doubt that, as limited nuclear counter-force attacks become more comprehensive, the destruction in terms of casualties between "counter-force" and "counter-population" targetting becomes more and more blurred. Either super-Power should realize before resorting to any limited nuclear option that, even if limited to military targets, it causes casualties similar to all-out attacks. This same argument applies to the window of vulnerability in case of use of intercontinental ballistic missiles. It is our hope that decision-makers on both sides will understand the collateral consequences of hypothetical first strikes. That understanding will destroy the underpinnings of any thinking by either super-Power to design a limited counter-force attack or to fear such an attack from its adversary. There is no escape from total annihilation once strategic nuclear weapons are used, and the use of tactical ones leads to escalation to use strategic ones. Should not a total ban be the logical resort to be sought by both super-Powers? Are we not seeing just what an inkling of radioactive material can do? Should we not bear in mind the scenario of 80,000 nuclear warheads being used and the havoc or end to civilization and life on earth it would bring? We urge the super-Powers to spare the earth and the heavens the wrath of doomsday. The responsibility of a lack of a freeze on nuclear weapons and the non-conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty lies with the same Powers as hold the world under the threat of annihilation, the self-appointed guardians of nuclear peace which are unwilling to reduce their nuclear-destruction power. Egypt asks for a moratorium on the use of nuclear

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weapons, a moratorium on testing, and a freeze. Its interest stems not from a tangential vantage point but from direct participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and in the First Committee of the General Assembly dealing with these topics.

The Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries, in their last meeting, launched an appeal to the big Powers to enter into a constructive dialogue. The talks have started and we earnestly hope that they do not grind sluggishly to a halt. Egypt also believes that the only way to put a stop to the arms race is through negotiations between the super-Powers. There is no alternative to negotiations, determined political will and mutual trust for the present arms talks between the United States and the Soviet Union to result in fruition.

Let us not forget that both super-Powers as early as 1961, building on a General Assembly consensus call for general and complete disarmament in November 1959, issued a joint statement of agreed principles on disarmament negotiations in what is usually referred to as the Zorin-McCloy agreement of 1961. The first principle in that agreement, which has continuing validity today, is that

"the goal of negotiations is to achieve agreement on a programme which will ensure that disarmament is general and complete and war is no longer an instrument for settling international problems".

We call upon both Powers to give more impetus to their Geneva talks, not only in relation to their bilateral interests, but in the wider interest of humanity. We expect and hope that this will be done in a spirit devoid of propaganda and aimed specifically at achieving concrete disarmament results.

At this juncture, we share the opinion of many Member States in the Commission that confidence-building measures are useful for creating favourable conditions for

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disarmament and for promoting détente and friendly relations between States. We have vigorously participated in the work of the Commission on item (9) on the agenda and will do so again. We believe that once the conceptual clarity of guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures is achieved by the Disarmament Commission, this would be a boon to other efforts exerted in the same field in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Stockholm, or in the mutual and balanced force reduction talks between the United States and the Soviet Union held in Vienna. However, confidence-building measures cannot be a substitute for the negotiation of disarmament measures. Cessation and reversal of the arms race through genuine measures of disarmament would themselves lead to greater trust and confidence among States.

Another substantive item - 5 (a) and (b) - is a carry-over subject which the Commission has already dealt with before. The reduction of military budgets is, in our view, closely linked to positive intentions concerning the implementation of the aims of complete disarmament. This is one of the measures of disarmament and a result of it. Therefore, if there is positive political will for disarmament, the reduction of military budgets will not constitute any real problem. Until such intentions are displayed, we hope that the Commission will at this session be able to reach a solution concerning the formulation of something along these lines that would meet with consensus concerning principles and steps incumbent upon States vis-à-vis a gradual reduction in military budgets agreed upon and to be implemented, while taking into account relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Other issues before the current session of the Commission are certainly not new. They have all been considered at one time or another, albeit in varying degrees. We shall, of course, be addressing each of those agenda items by actively contributing to the deliberations of the different working groups. For the moment,

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however, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the massive build-up of South Africa's military machine, including its frenzied acquisition of a nuclear-weapon capability for repressive and aggressive purposes, has given another diabolical dimension to an already volatile situation. The racist régime's nuclear programme has enabled it to acquire a nuclear-weapon capability, and that capability has been enhanced by the continued support of its collaborators.

Egypt, as an African country, attaches paramount importance to this issue, because of its impact on international peace and security and because it obviously contravenes the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa and the principles of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament.

This nuclear capability came into being and developed because of the consistent co-operation given to the racist régime in South Africa by some States and transnational corporations in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and commitments entered into under the non-proliferation Treaty. This co-operation continues despite the fact that the racist régime refuses to submit its nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Finally, the Disarmament Commission is a vital component of the United Nations system for the consideration of disarmament issues. We attach great importance to this body, since we believe in the centrality of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. My Government's view of this role is fully elucidated in document A/CN.10/69/Add.5, dated 22 May 1985. It is incumbent upon us to promote the effectiveness of the Disarmament Commission in providing recommendations which will have a positive impact on disarmament negotiations, that is, if we genuinely wish it to contribute systematically to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in international disarmament action.

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Although this year does not present the Commission with a litmus test, we must remember that there are attempts to discredit its role as a forum for the consideration of crucial disarmament problems and for initiating effective and urgent disarmament measures. We have no doubt in our mind that this year's session will prove the critics of the Disarmament Commission wrong. Our task is to rise to the challenge.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.