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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 2 May 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)

- 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. YAMADA (Japan): May I first of all say how happy I am to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over this body. I pledge to you my delegation's full co-operation in your important undertakings. My congratulations also go to the other officers of the Commission.

Since last year the dialogue between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has been bringing about concrete and visible progress in wide-ranging fields, including arms control, regional issues and bilateral relations. We welcome that encouraging development, which will certainly contribute to the lessening of tensions between East and West and to the promotion of peace and security in the whole world.

Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the successful signing of the treaty between the two countries on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles last December. We earnestly hope that the treaty will be ratified and put into effect without delay and that the United States and the Soviet Union will promptly move forward towards the conclusion of the treaty on the 50 per cent reduction of their strategic arms and to other successful results of their negotiations.

Past experiences have taught us that there was little substantive progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations when the relationship between the two super-Powers was strained. Now is the time for us to make the obverse come true. We should make the fullest possible use of the positive momentum in United States-Soviet bilateral negotiations to advance further with our multilateral disarmament agenda. We should not allow the bilateral negotiations to detract from possible progress in multilateral deliberations.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

It is important that we see the disarmament process as an organic whole in which bilateral, regional and multilateral processes are not divorced from but complement and reinforce one another. We should recognize anew that multilateral negotiations play a very important part in the disarmament process, as amply demonstrated by the consistent and meaningful progress being achieved in the negotiations on the treaty on banning chemical weapons at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

I believe that this forum, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, provides all Members of the United Nations with valuable opportunities to conduct concrete and constructive deliberations on some selected items on the disarmament agenda. However, I must state in candour that the Commission has not lived up to our expectations, either in terms of the level of interest it has attracted or of the substantive results it has yielded, although it has been addressing many items.

This current session of the Commission is of particular importance, convened as it is in the weeks just before the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Commission has to deliberate on and adopt its special report to be submitted to the third special session in a compressed time frame. The deliberations here will certainly influence those at the third special session. My delegation therefore suggests that we take a purposeful and pragmatic approach that will focus effectively on those agenda items that can expeditiously be dealt with by consensus at this session and thus provide useful and concrete input to the third special session.

In the view of my delegation the agenda items that deserve the focus of our attention in this regard are, first, the consideration of guidelines for confidence-building measures; secondly, the reduction of military budgets and, thirdly, the consideration of the question of verification. Let us try to reach

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consensus on those items at this session by building on what we have achieved so far.

With regard to confidence-building measures, a subject which is on our agenda again this year, we already have a nearly completed set of guidelines as a result of the realistic endeavours of delegations in the past. We should complete the guidelines through constructive compromises on such remaining problems as transparency of information, against the background of the growing recognition of the importance of the concept.

My delegation also hopes that in discussing the reduction of military budgets the Commission will finally solve the outstanding issue of transparency and comparability. A prerequisite to meaningful negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military budgets is the elaboration of an agreed method of measuring and comparing military budgets. In this context I call upon those countries that have not done so to report promptly on their military budgets, in accordance with the standardized international instrument.

In any arms control and disarmament agreements, verification plays an essential role. In considering this question we should always bear in mind that specific verification methods need to be considered in relation to the specific arms control or disarmament agreements in question. We should guard against the pitfall of endless and abstract debate on verification in general. Once we have a common basic understanding of the importance of verification and related general principles, we should go on to engage ourselves in various specific negotiations - bilateral, regional or multilateral - bearing this common understanding in mind. From that viewpoint we should expeditiously finalize the emerging consensus on this item, without falling into the pitfall I mentioned.

Let me now touch upon nuclear and conventional disarmament. It is Japan's belief that we should resolutely pursue both nuclear and conventional disarmament

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as a part of the process leading ultimately to general and complete disarmament. In so doing we need to take full account of factors such as the interrelationship between nuclear and conventional disarmament and the characteristics of the region concerned.

(Mr. Yamada, Japan)

Japan considers the realization of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban to be a step of high priority in disarmament, and has been working consistently to this end. It is to our regret that the Conference on Disarmament has failed so far to make any substantive progress on the subject. Japan has repeatedly made clear its position of opposing any nuclear testing by any country. My delegation wishes to register again its regret that nuclear testing has continued.

At the same time, we warmly welcome the agreement last year between the United States and the Soviet Union to begin full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations designed to lead to the ultimate objective of the complete cessation of nuclear testing, as part of an effective disarmament process to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. It is encouraging that the negotiations are now actively under way towards the conclusion of the first phase, namely, agreement on the verification protocols of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty of 1974 and the 1976 treaty on nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. We earnestly hope that the negotiations will proceed at the earliest practicable date to the second phase - intermediate limitations on nuclear testing, where a valuable opportunity may emerge for us to proceed with our work in the multilateral forum and make realistic and substantial progress.

In concluding, let me stress that the success of the third special session requires not just the accumulation of our efforts in bilateral, regional and multilateral processes, including the Conference on Disarmament, but also, importantly, useful contributions by this Commission. I earnestly hope that at this session the Commission will make tangible contributions to the third special session through realistic and constructive deliberations. I say this in the belief that we are equal to the task before us.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The Ukrainian delegation welcomes you, Sir, to the important and lofty post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. We very much appreciate your qualities as an experienced and knowledgeable diplomat, which your work in the preparations for this session has made abundantly clear. We wish you every success and hope that under your skilful leadership the Commission will achieve impressive results. We shall, of course, do everything in our power to co-operate with you in attaining that goal.

The current session of the Commission's work is being held during a period when we note positive trends in the international situation. I believe that the most important and most outstanding recent event was the signing of the first treaty in history on the elimination of two classes of nuclear weapons. The journey from limiting weapons to their reduction and elimination has begun; a start has been made on genuine nuclear disarmament. The treaty has demonstrated that a safer world, free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, can really be attained. The process begun by the treaty must be intensified and further developed.

Today there are prospects of achieving agreement on a 50 per cent cut in strategic offensive weapons, within the framework of observance of the anti-ballistic missile Treaty; on the conclusion of work on a convention on the complete and effective prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons; and on the taking of concrete steps towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

The main need now is consistently to increase the efforts of all States to give the process of disarmament an irreversible, inexorable character and conclude new agreements aimed at the further reduction of accumulated arsenals of weapons, leading to the establishment of a military balance at an ever-lower level and the elimination of the danger of war throughout the world.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The peoples of the world have placed great hope in the forthcoming summit meeting in Moscow between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States.

As we know, regional tension and regional conflicts only fuel the arms race, but there is also a clear reverse connection. The settlement of controversies and the taking of agreed measures to build confidence have a positive effect on limiting the arms race.

Of extreme importance in that context is the attainment of a political settlement in the situation around Afghanistan, which has become pivotal in the defusing of regional conflicts, a concrete manifestation of the new thinking in world politics. The conclusion of the Geneva agreement is by no means a matter of purely local significance; it has shown that new political thinking can prevail over the psychology of confrontation, over worn-out stereotypes in international politics. The agreement must become a stimulus for the settlement of other regional conflicts and help us find the best possible solutions to eliminate crisis situations in other parts of the world, thus contributing to reducing the threat of war.

Against this encouraging background, the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is scheduled to take place in less than a month. The Ukrainian delegation attaches particular importance to this most representative world forum in the disarmament field. In terms both of the items on its agenda and of the possible results it is by no means a run-of-the-mill event. It provides the opportunity for every member of the international community to shoulder its share of the responsibility for the fate of the world.

It is our profound belief that the work of the special session will confirm the concept of security through disarmament and other points formulated in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. We expect that

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the forthcoming special session will, on the basis of a thorough analysis of the most important aspects of the arms race and disarmament negotiations, indicate the main areas for disarmament and strengthening security, give a fillip to all relevant bilateral and multilateral negotiations and take a decision to perfect negotiating and conference machinery in this area, particularly to enhance the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

The General Assembly will at this session of course inevitably discuss the whole range of problems of monitoring and verification, including aspects affecting the United Nations role in this field. While disarmament in global terms affects everyone, nobody must be excluded from monitoring and verification. Therefore, we should internationalize efforts in this area and involve as many States as possible in disarmament and in verification of the limitation, reduction and elimination of weapons. The United Nations should play a leading role in this process.

In the Ukrainian delegation's view, those factors give particular significance to the work of this session of the Commission on Disarmament, one of the deliberative organs of the General Assembly. The Commission could promote the progress that has been evidenced in disarmament and produce concrete proposals on such important questions as nuclear disarmament, with its high priority, conventional disarmament, the strengthening of confidence-building measures, the moral and political force of international legal documents, enhancing the role of the United Nations in disarmament and so on. That would be a genuine contribution by the Commission to the work of the General Assembly at the forthcoming third special session devoted to disarmament.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It is our view that effective nuclear disarmament measures and the prevention of nuclear war have a particular significance among other high-priority goals in the disarmament field, because nuclear weapons have created the greatest danger to mankind and the continued existence of civilization as a whole. To prevent the danger of the outbreak of a war in which nuclear weapons would be used, we must halt and reverse the nuclear arms race in all its aspects. The ultimate goal in this area must be the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and universal agreement on preventing their re-emergence. The concept, concrete timeframes and practical measures for moving towards a nuclear-free world, taking into account the security interests of all States, have been set forth in Mr. Gorbachev's declaration of 15 January 1986. Experience has shown the realistic nature and attainability of the goals in this programme.

Nor can we permit a situation where, along with disarmament in one area, we allow the arms race to develop in other areas. It would be unconscionable from any point of view to allow a situation where nuclear weapons that are being eliminated are to be replaced by conventional weapons, many contemporary forms of which are very close in their destructive capacity to weapons of mass destruction. That is why our delegation attaches great importance to the question of reducing armed forces and conventional weapons. At the recent meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, held in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, a constructive programme for such reductions in Europe was submitted.

To reduce the danger of surprise attack it is often proposed that particular attention be paid to the elimination of those weapons which are the foundation of the offensive power of armed forces, including tactical nuclear weapons. The historical asymmetries and imbalances which have evolved in the field of conventional weapons in Europe would be eliminated on a reciprocal basis by a

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reduction on the part of that side which has superiority in any given form of weaponry. This would be in keeping with the principles of equality and equal security of all sides, in the interests of all European countries. All the steps could be carried out on the basis of the exchange of the necessary information, with an effective system of monitoring and verification.

One of the most important items on the Commission's agenda is the consideration of the role of the United Nations in disarmament. In our delegation's view, the international community's efforts in the field of disarmament will be effective only to the extent that the United Nations, its Security Council and other international institutions and machinery are allowed to function effectively. We must therefore decisively enhance the authority and role of the United Nations and its decisions and strengthen our Organization's political, legal and moral status. In this regard, it would in particular be advisable, after appropriate preparation, to convene a special meeting or series of meetings of the Security Council at the foreign minister level to discuss nuclear disarmament problems. In the course of the exchange of views concrete measures could be mapped out which could lead to freeing the world of nuclear weapons. In our view, we should also invigorate the studies that have been undertaken within the United Nations framework on various aspects of the arms race and disarmament. It is important to increase the contribution of United Nations studies to the practical solution of disarmament problems. A more effective role in this area could also be played by the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies, which brings together eminent specialists from many Members of the United Nations.

Today, more than ever before, the United Nations, the major universal security organ, can and must act as a genuine centre for harmonizing the actions of all States so as to rid this and future generations of the scourge of war. The

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Commission could call upon all States to take part in a joint search for effective ways and means of using the United Nations to create and build confidence, to overcome hostile stereotypes and to humanize international relations.

It also seems to us that the United Nations role in the disarmament field would be substantially strengthened if we heightened the moral and political force and status of important political documents adopted in the United Nations by consensus, in particular those such as the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is also equally important, of course, to ensure consensus at the stage of implementing resolutions and to try to see to it that consensus genuinely expresses the readiness of its participants to undertake disarmament measures.

We should also like to express our conviction that the discussion of this question at this session of the Commission will focus on practical results. The Ukrainian delegation intends to submit for the Commission's consideration a working paper on the subject, a continuation and development of the document which the Ukrainian delegation joined in sponsoring at the last session of the Disarmament Commission.

In conclusion, we should like to draw the attention of members of the Commission to the explosive nature of the situation in South Africa and southern Africa as a whole. The reasons for this are well known: the inhumane, reactionary, aggressive policy of the Pretoria régime. The danger of South Africa's policy is growing by leaps and bounds, if we take into account what is known as the nuclear factor. The international community has repeatedly and categorically condemned South Africa's nuclear ambitions as a genuine threat not only to regional security and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons but also to world peace. Unfortunately, we cannot but note that genuine progress in the area of South Africa's nuclear potential, owing to the position taken by a number of

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countries, has not been possible. We support the proposals on this matter put forward here in the past to proceed on the basis of the real situation and to take fully into account the views of the world public. We hope that it will be possible at this session to produce concrete proposals and recommendations for the General Assembly.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission has before it a very important list of tasks; they can be accomplished only by enhancing the effectiveness of and drawing on all our resources. The Ukrainian delegation wishes to see the Commission's work crowned with success and is ready to make its constructive contribution to the process of preparing proposals for the forthcoming forty-third session of the General Assembly.

Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland): Let me first of all congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Your experience and ability in the disarmament field are well known, and we look forward to a successful session of the Commission.

Allow me also to congratulate the other officers of the Commission and to pledge my delegation's full co-operation.

This year our deliberations in the Disarmament Commission are taking place at a very specific time - almost immediately before the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our deliberations are taking place in a qualitatively new international atmosphere: the two major nuclear Powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, have agreed to eliminate totally an entire class of nuclear weapons - the intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles of both countries. We earnestly hope that this agreement will soon enter into force and thus start the era of real nuclear disarmament so much awaited and needed by peoples all over the world.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

This positive atmosphere has been particularly strengthened by the recent agreement concerning the situation around Afghanistan. It is now very important firmly to consolidate those results and to facilitate the next step - that is, to finalize a Soviet-American strategic arms reduction by 50 per cent while reinforcing the anti-ballistic missile régime, and also to conclude the treaty on the total elimination of chemical weapons.

Poland would strongly deplore any measure going counter to those positive trends in the disarmament field and opposes any attempts to modernize armaments and to put them at higher levels. Quite to the contrary, Poland's traditional policy has been to ensure security in the region in which it is situated, Central Europe, at the lowest level of armaments. The Rapacki plan of 1957 for an atom-free Central Europe was a pioneering initiative and has become known world-wide. This concern for a secure Central Europe at a lower level of armaments is at the root of the Polish plan on decreasing armaments and increasing confidence in that region, presented a year ago by President Wojciech Jaruzelski.

The Jaruzelski plan takes equally into consideration the necessity of progressing in all directions, be it in the nuclear field or the conventional field. To facilitate its implementation, it foresees a flexible approach by stages, and it takes into account the multiplicity of elements of which regional security is composed within the framework of an effective global security system. Therefore it does not exclude the gradual expansion of the plan to cover the whole territory of Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals.

Foreseeing the necessity of the gradual elimination of operational and tactical nuclear arms, the plan stresses also the importance of eliminating conventional arms of a most destructive power and offensive character, thus eliminating the possibility of surprise attack.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

We consider it important also that from the notion of offensive concepts the world pass to the notion of defensive doctrines only. That is why the Juruzelski plan foresees also negotiations on military doctrines, giving them a totally new meaning, a defensive character.

All the foregoing should be accompanied by a constructive and future-oriented approach to confidence-building measures, one of its important elements being a verification system for offensive weapons.

Poland's interest in regional disarmament stems from my country's very hard historical experience. Central Europe is Poland's immediate security environment, a region of key importance for the security of the whole of Europe. The Jaruzelski plan has an open character and flexible form, and we take careful note of all opinions presented by other nations and Governments. We are continuing efforts to further elaborate that plan, and we will give it new, specific expression in due time.

Following Poland's active involvement in world disarmament efforts, it is the earnest intention of my delegation to extend those efforts here at this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. It is true that for the first time since the first special session we have been allocated three weeks instead of the traditional four. It is also true that for the first time we have a record number of eight items on our agenda, which is certainly not going to facilitate our task. Fortunately, as I mentioned at the outset, we do have a positive international climate which gives us grounds for a positive approach to the perspective of the work of this year's session of the Disarmament Commission and its outcome.

Poland is deeply convinced that the prevention of nuclear war is the most urgent and important problem facing mankind today. We already have good examples in the Treaty on intermediate nuclear forces and a good prospect for the Treaty eliminating 50 per cent of strategic nuclear missiles. However we believe that the

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best solution would be to get rid of all nuclear weapons, as proposed by the Soviet Union in January 1986 and then in Reykjavik. Until that becomes a reality, we believe that practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war should include the following. First, a commitment by all nuclear-weapon States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; the Soviet Union and China have already made such a commitment, and they should be followed by the remaining nuclear Powers. Secondly, a freeze by all nuclear-weapon Powers on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons and on the production of fissionable materials for military purposes. Thirdly, a ban on all nuclear tests. Fourthly, the prevention of the militarization of outer space. In that context, the Commission will recall that at the fortieth session Wojciech Jaruzelski proposed that a study on the diverse consequences of the militarization of outer space be prepared at the United Nations by international experts. A relevant study has been completed by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and the proposed subject of the consequences of such militarization has been largely reflected upon therein.

Poland has always favoured initiatives aimed at the gradual reduction of the military budgets of all States, particularly all nuclear-weapons Powers and other militarily significant States. We reiterated that commitment last March together with all the members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, including an appeal to the member States of NATO to declare a moratorium for one or two years on any increase in military expenditures by the Warsaw Treaty and NATO member States with a view to their further effective reduction. We do hope that a final effort will be made at this session to complete the recommendations of the Disarmament Commission on this item.

It is regrettable that the Commission has so far been unable to adopt recommendations on the issue of the nuclear capability of South Africa. My delegation will support the African countries on this issue and will favour resolute

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measures by the international community against the Pretoria régime in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant decisions of the General Assembly.

We will continue the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. To my delegation it appears that that role has never been as important as it is today, when the momentum of disarmament reached recently should be maintained and consolidated, starting with our own Disarmament Commission, through the possibilities of the First Committee, up to the General Assembly, and particularly the Security Council, whose prerogatives in disarmament have not so far been fully used. The role of the United Nations in disarmament would be substantially enhanced if resolutions of the General Assembly calling for concrete steps to turn back the arms race and establish a moral and political climate in which it would be possible to embark on genuine moves to limit and reduce military capabilities were actually put into practice. My delegation presented its views in detail last year in document A/CN.10/94, and it intends to update them this year together with other socialist countries.

Being a significant user of ocean lanes, and viewing the growing naval arms race, with its more and more sophisticated weapons, particularly the nuclear ones, as having a direct impact on its security, Poland considers that the halting of the naval arms race and the adoption of specific disarmament measures in that field would represent a major contribution to the consolidation of peace and international security. The elaboration of recommendations in that sense, and particularly in the field of confidence-building measures at sea, would be a development sincerely welcomed by my delegation.

(Mr. Noworyta, Poland)

For the second consecutive year our Commission has two items of particular significance on its agenda: the consideration of issues related to conventional disarmament, the importance of which for Poland I had elaborated on at the beginning of my statement, and the consideration of the question of verification in all its aspects. The latter item has recently acquired particular significance. Thanks to the Canadian delegation this subject has been comprehensively compiled and presented to the Commission for detailed discussion. We are hopeful that the principles of verification, largely agreed upon last year, will be completed during this session.

Finally, an item of particular importance is returning to our agenda, namely the consideration of guidelines for confidence-building measures. It is our sincere hope that the progress achieved in recent years in the domain of openness and transparency will allow the Commission to finalize its recommendations concerning confidence-building measures.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission will bring about very substantial results, so that they can be presented to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament next month, and thus contribute to its fruitful work.

The CHAIRMAN: Before concluding our work for this afternoon, I would like to draw the Commission's attention to informal paper No. 1, which the Commission has before it, on the work timetable for the week of 2-6 May.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.