DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 10 May 1988, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HEFBURN (Bahamas)

- Oral progress reports from Chairmen of subsidiary bodies

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ORAL PROGRESS REPORTS FROM CHAIRMEN OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The CHAIRMAN: This year the Disarmament Commission, in the early days of the session, has disposed of all issues related to the organization of work and completed the general exchange of views on time. The subsidiary bodies began their work on the respective agenda items on Wednesday, 4 May, and each group has now had two or three meetings. In this connection I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all delegations for the spirit of co-operation they have demonstrated, which has greatly assisted me in my task. It is because of that co-operation that our proceedings have been conducted in a most effective manner and the available conference resources efficiently utilized.

As scheduled, today we shall receive the first round of oral progress reports from the chairmen of various subsidiary bodies so as to assess the state of affairs on various subjects and decide our work programme for the next stage of our deliberations.

First I would like to call upon the Chairman of the Contact Group on agenda item 4, regarding the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The Contact Group on agenda item 4 held three meetings last week. At those meetings the Contact Group reached agreement on its method of work and, taking as a basis the report issued by the corresponding contact group at the last session of the Disarmament Commission and its annex, which contained a set of draft recommendations, the Contact Group had a first reading of the set of recommendations to be made this year. As a result of that reading, recommendations were drafted, and the Group will concentrate on them in the second phase of its work.
This week will be devoted to that second phase, which will be fundamental to our efforts, since the Group intends to widen the area of agreement on the recommendations it will be considering. The results of our joint efforts this week will to a large extent determine the results of the Group's work as a whole. In the first phase all delegations showed the necessary readiness to co-operate, and I trust that that readiness will also prevail as we move to the second phase of our work.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call upon the Chairman of the Consultation Group on agenda item 5, "Reduction of military budgets".

Mr. MELESCANU (Romania): Permit me first of all to express to you, Mr. Chairmen, and to the members of the Commission, my appreciation for having entrusted me with the task of acting as Chairman of the Consultation Group on agenda item 5.

Pursuant to the mandate given us by General Assembly resolution 42/36, the Consultation Group continued consideration of the last outstanding paragraph of the principles that should govern States in the field of the freezing and reduction of military budgets, in order to be able to submit its recommendations.

The Consultation Group has held three meetings to date, and I have conducted informal consultations with interested delegations as well. The discussions concerned a new proposal for paragraph 7, as well as proposals presented by various delegations.

The discussions led us to three basic conclusions. The first was that meaningful negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military budgets require acceptance of transparency and comparability. The second conclusion was that the elaboration of agreed methods of measuring and comparing military expenditure is an
essential element. The third is that States participating in further negotiations should utilize a standardized international reporting instrument and that meanwhile the use of the reporting system adopted by the General Assembly in 1980 should be encouraged as an important step.
Although these basic conclusions are shared by all delegations, there are still certain differences in their approach concerning the actual drafting of the principle.

I should like, however, to underline that there seems to exist a common desire to conclude the work on these principles by drafting an agreed text of paragraph 7. The Consultation Group will continue consideration of that paragraph in order to finalize the text.

I should like to make an appeal to all delegations to be more flexible in order to be able to finalize the text of principle 7. Taking into account all the views which were expressed, I personally think a balanced compromise for that paragraph could be the following text:

"Meaningful negotiations on the freezing and reduction of military budgets would require that all parties to such negotiations accept the practices of transparency and comparability. They would also require the elaboration of methods of measuring and comparing military expenditures between specified periods of time and between countries with different budgeting systems. To this end the participating States should utilize a standard international reporting instrument. Meanwhile, the use of the reporting system adopted by the General Assembly in 1980 should be encouraged as an important step in this context."

I intend to submit that formulation to our Group at its afternoon meeting, which is scheduled for 3 p.m. today.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the Chairman of Working Group I, on agenda item 6, regarding the nuclear capability of South Africa, Ambassador Daya Perera of Sri Lanka.
Mr. PERERA (Sri Lanka), Chairman of Working Group I: In my capacity as Chairman of Working Group I, dealing with item 6, on the nuclear capability of South Africa, it is my duty to keep the Commission abreast of the progress we have achieved thus far.

As of today, Working Group I has held four formal meetings. At its first meeting, the Working Group agreed to consider as a basis for its work the text of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its forty-second session (A/42/42). After a general exchange of views, the Working Group began the substantive part of its work of examining the text paragraph by paragraph.

Yesterday, at its 4th meeting, the Working Group completed the first reading of its working paper. Although further discussions are still needed before we can assess the concrete achievements of this session, the Working Group has come very close to agreement on a certain number of paragraphs. In that respect I am grateful to the delegations participating in Working Group I for having conducted the debate in a very constructive atmosphere. Maintaining this business-like attitude in the later stages of our work will contribute, I am certain, to a positive and significant outcome of our deliberations on this important issue.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the representative of Cameroon, who will speak on behalf of Ambassador Paul Engo, Chairman of Working Group II on agenda item 7, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

Mr. DJIENA (Cameroon) (interpretation from French): It is my honour to report to the Disarmament Commission on behalf of Ambassador Engo, who is unable to be here. Working Group II has held two working meetings. At the first meeting, as had been agreed, a contact group was established under the chairmanship of Ambassador Butler of Australia; that contact group has held a number of formal
(Mr. Djiena, Cameroon)

meetings, and Ambassador Butler has undertaken informal consultations. Those consultations relate to the paper produced last year in the Disarmament Commission, setting out the various proposals put forward to revitalize the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

On the proposal of its Chairman, the contact group decided to begin its first reading of the document with paragraph 14, which relates directly to machinery. The group will return to other paragraphs relating to political matters.

In formal meetings on the second part of the paper, beginning with the section on machinery, the group conducted an exchange of views on paragraphs 14 to 17. In informal consultations, the Chairman is pursuing negotiations on the other paragraphs. I believe he will be able in due course to report to the Disarmament Commission on the progress of those informal consultations.

The CHAIRMAN: Ambassador Rolf Ekeus of Sweden is Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on agenda item 8, regarding naval armaments and disarmament. I call on him now.

Mr. EKEUS (Sweden), Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on Item 8: You yourself, Sir, chaired the opening of our consultations at the Group's first meeting, on 5 May, and thereafter delegated the actual conduct of the substantive open-ended consultations to me.

Consultations have been carried out in the course of two meetings, one on 5 May and the other on 6 May. With the agreement of the participants, the consultations are based on the Chairman's paper on agenda item 8, from last year's session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/102). Also, a number of working papers have been submitted or are in the process of being submitted: one from Finland (A/CN.10/90/Rev.1), one from Sweden (A/CN.10/101/Rev.1) and one from Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/CN.10/109).
There appears to be widespread agreement in the consultations that the significant elements and principles incorporated into last year's Chairman's paper should be retained and consolidated. Discussions continue on the question of significant elements and principles, but the Group has started its exchange of views with regard to measures. With that goal in mind, the Group has concentrated on exchanges of views especially on objectives, in order to identify a number of objectives. At a later stage it will look in more detail into measures to achieve those objectives.
The discussion so far has touched upon naval disarmament and confidence-building measures.

A number of meetings are planned for this week. We still have quite a lot of work to do, but I feel that the understanding we have reached on the material contained in the Chairman's paper on agenda item 8 will be useful this year, so we shall keep within the framework of that material.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group III on item 9 regarding conventional disarmament, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin of Denmark.

Mr. MELLBIN (Denmark), Chairman of Working Group III: Working Group III was re-established this year to deal with conventional disarmament - item 9 on the Commission's agenda. The Working Group has held three meetings.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Commission last year, the Working Group has taken as its point of departure the achievements of last year's session. On this basis it has been possible to identify the problems which still have to be solved if the Working Group is to carry out its task and present a substantive report to the Commission at this year's session. Everything considered, it is my opinion that this should be possible.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group IV on item 10 regarding verification in all its aspects, Ambassador Douglas Roche of Canada.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada), Chairman of Working Group IV: Working Group IV has held three meetings so far, and the Group has before it a new working paper submitted by me as Chairman (A/CN.10/107), entitled "Verification in all its aspects: additional principles". It has served as the basic document for consideration of the subject. While taking into account all other documents submitted by delegations, the Group has concentrated on the deliberation of
principles. In the course of those deliberations a number of delegations have put forward some useful suggestions on the additional principles of verification contained in the Chairman's paper, with a view to reaching agreements on them, as well as the 10 principles adopted by consensus last year, so as to put all of them forward as recommendations to the forthcoming third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

By yesterday the Group had completed its consideration of the additional principles. I have undertaken to prepare a paper and submit it to the Working Group on Thursday, 12 May. The paper will reflect my understanding of the discussion of principles on the basis of selectivity and the criterion of anticipated consensus. We shall next consider the other two parts of our subject - provisions and techniques, which we shall discuss this morning, and then the role of the United Nations in the field of verification.

I want to thank all of the delegations that have participated in the deliberations for showing a very positive attitude and a constructive spirit. It is my belief that the Group will be able to carry out the mandate entrusted to it and make concrete recommendations on the subject to the third special session.

The CHAIRMAN: As to the progress made in the Consultation Group on item 11, regarding guidelines for confidence-building measures, in my capacity as Chairman of that Group I wish to report the following.

The Consultation Group on item 11 has held two meetings. The Group has considered the subject on the basis of the text deliberated at the 1986 session of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in annex II of the Commission's report (A/41/42), entitled "Draft guidelines for appropriate types of confidence-building measures and for the implementation of such measures on a global or regional level".
During consideration of the subject a number of proposals have been made with regard to two conference papers that have been submitted on the three paragraphs of annex II remaining - 2.33, 2.34 and 2.36. Delegations in the Group have conducted their work in a very business-like manner, with a view to finding a formula for a compromise text. I should like to express my thanks to the delegations for the positive attitude they have shown in participating in the deliberations on this subject, and particularly those that have agreed to work in one language, without the use of the interpretation service. That gives me confidence that we can carry out the mandate given to us and have a positive report to submit to the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Group has completed what may be considered a first reading on all the proposals submitted and has narrowed down to the final stage the differences between delegations. I hope that by the end of this week the Group will have a better idea of the course of action to be taken on the text.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.