DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 21 May 1990, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia)

- Statement by the Chairman
- Reports by Chairmen of subsidiary bodies

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: Last Tuesday, 15 May, the Commission heard the first round of progress reports from the Chairmen of its subsidiary bodies. Since then all subsidiary bodies have continued intensive work on their respective agenda items; in particular, they have started consideration of various texts for concrete recommendations. During the past week I have seen that all delegations have made the utmost effort to achieve agreement on the recommendations by consensus. I sincerely appreciate those efforts by all delegations, and especially those of the Chairmen of the various Groups.

REPORTS BY CHAIRMEN OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The CHAIRMAN: As scheduled, today we shall receive the second round of oral progress reports from the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies so as to assess the current state of affairs on the items concerned and to facilitate our programme of work for the last stage of our deliberations.

I call on the Chairman of the Contact Group on agenda item 4, regarding the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament, Mr. Sergey Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): During the past week the Contact Group on agenda item 4 has continued its work on the text of a compilation of proposals and recommendations. As a result of the work done, the text has already taken on a more succinct form. We have also been able to make its structure more logical.

At the same time, I must point out that a number of recommendations are still in brackets. Consultations are still going on about a number of important
recommendations, and these consultations give us some reason for hope. We expect the consultations to be completed today and tomorrow, and the Group will then be able to take up the report on its completed work and finish its work, according to schedule, by the end of this week.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group I on item 5, regarding the nuclear capability of South Africa, Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana of Nepal.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): Since my report last Tuesday on the progress of the work of Working Group I on the nuclear capability of South Africa, I have been continuing, as desired by the Group, informal consultations with various members of the Group. I am happy to report that we have made substantial progress, and the members have asked me to prepare a Chairman's informal working paper, which I have almost completed. After preliminary consultations with members, I may submit it for consideration of the Group as a whole for further improvement of the text. We hope to be able to adopt it by consensus this week.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of Working Group II on item 6, regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): Ambassador Garcia Moritan of Argentina has been called home for a few days, so until his return I shall be taking care of the chairmanship of the Group to try to conclude our work.

We have continued our meetings, and Ambassador Garcia Moritan has prepared a paper, which was shown to the Working Group last Friday, when several suggestions
regarding it were made from the floor. The Working Group has a meeting scheduled for this afternoon in this room at 3 p.m., and I intend to start considering those suggestions at that time. A paper containing the suggestions will be distributed this afternoon, and I hope that we shall look at it in the meeting. I then intend, if the Group agrees, to adjourn to open-ended consultations in one of the small rooms to see whether we can go over the paper and try to achieve a final version of the so-called machinery part of the document.

That is my intention as regards the continuation of our work with a view to trying to reach a final paper by the end of this week.
The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Indonesia, as Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on item 7, regarding naval armaments and disarmament, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti, who will report on behalf of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): Since our Commission last met, on 15 May 1990, the Consultation Group on item 7 - Naval armaments and disarmament - has had four meetings, including one extended meeting. In addition, the Co-ordinator of the Group has had several private consultations with some interested delegations.

In an effort to improve the working paper prepared by the Chairman of the 1989 session of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/134), which is the basis for consideration of item 7 at this session, the Consultation Group discussed on Monday and Tuesday last week, 14 and 15 May, the draft Chairman's paper (A/CN.10/1990/Item 7/CRP.1).

As a result of the discussion, the Co-ordinator of the Consultation Group produced, at the meeting held on Wednesday, 16 May 1990, a revised text - CRP.1/Rev.1 - as his attempt to reflect better the general trends of the discussion. The Consultation Group then immediately embarked on a paragraph-by-paragraph discussion of that revised text. That exercise was completed on Friday last week. It is heartening to report that important progress was made and that this was made possible by the positive and constructive participation of interested delegations.

At the meeting of the Consultation Group this afternoon the Co-ordinator will introduce the second revision of the text and will suggest the immediate discussion of the new paper paragraph by paragraph. It is hoped that, with the same spirit of co-operation as has been shown by the participating delegations so far, the Consultation Group will be able to complete its work as scheduled.
Let me conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation to the delegations participating in the work of the Consultation Group for their co-operation.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group III, on item 8, regarding conventional disarmament, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin of Denmark.

Mr. MELLBIN (Denmark): Working Group III has held three meetings and a number of private consultations since my report to this Commission last Tuesday, 15 May.

The Group is continuing its efforts with a view to establishing agreement on a substantial report on the basis of the Chairman's draft. Some further progress has been made and consensus or decisive progress has been achieved on paragraphs dealing with the implications of accumulation and sophistication of conventional arms and the need and responsibility for agreements and other measures in the field of conventional disarmament; the subjects and objectives of conventional disarmament; the European aspect; factors governing negotiations on conventional disarmament; the value of unilateral measures; the importance of regional efforts; and the implications of arms transfers and illicit traffic in arms.

In the course of the next few days the Group will intensify its efforts aimed at establishing agreement on a complete report.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group IV, on item 9, regarding the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, Ambassador Emeka Ayo Azikiwe of Nigeria.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): Working Group IV, on agenda item 9, regarding the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, has had three meetings since I last reported to the Commission at its plenary meeting on 15 May. As announced on that occasion, I submitted working paper A/CN.10/1990/WG.IV/CRP.1 to the Working Group in its afternoon meeting on the same day. In the preparation of that paper, consideration was given to the views and proposals expressed during the
first reading of working document A/CN.10/135, prepared by Canada last year, on the basis of which the Working Group has agreed to continue its work in order to fulfill the mandate given to it. The general wish of the Working Group to produce a concise and forward-looking document on the Third Disarmament Decade was also reflected in its working paper CRP.1. As a result, that paper could successfully reduce the length of document A/CN.10/135 without altering its structure and content.

Having heard comments on document A/CN.10/1990/WG.IV/CRP.1, along with suggestions made during my informal consultations with several delegations, on 17 May I introduced conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/WG.IV/CRP.2 for further consideration by the Group. This working paper was another attempt by the Chairman to bridge the gap on certain issues and to explore common ground which might command a consensus. In the working paper I have aimed at removing repetitive sentences and at streamlining the sequence of thought without an unnecessary increase in length. In my own judgement, this working paper was well received and over 90 per cent of its content would be acceptable to all delegations. Since 17 May the Working Group has been considering CRP.2. At the same time I have held intensive consultations with interested delegations to smooth out the remaining differences.

I intend to continue those informal consultations immediately after this plenary meeting and to produce a new working document this afternoon, as yet another attempt to arrive at a consensus document. Although the Chairman's paper to be circulated this afternoon may not satisfy the positions of every delegation, I appeal to them to consider it in its totality before deciding whether they can accept it.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to delegations for their support and co-operation extended to me, and I trust that their sincere wish to
have an agreed declaration which will chart our future efforts in the field of disarmament will enable us to resolve the remaining differences.

The CHAIRMAN: Lastly, I should like to call upon the Chairman of the Consultation Group on item 10, regarding objective information on military matters, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria.
Mr. HOHENFELDER (Austria): The Consultation Group on agenda item 10, "Objective information on military matters", held a total of seven meetings between 10 and 16 May. Since the last progress report, on 15 May, the Consultation Group's debate has focused on the global and regional dimension of objective information and on the related question whether the United Nations can or should play a role in that context.

The Consultation Group then discussed the advisability of the future elaboration of a set of principles or guidelines on objective information on military matters, and the parameters which should govern a possible régime on the exchange of objective information.

The afternoon meeting on 16 May was devoted to a concluding debate in the course of which delegations summarized their views on all aspects of the agenda item. Many delegations seized that opportunity to elaborate comprehensively on their positions on objective information on military matters.

I want to thank, very sincerely and cordially, all delegations that participated in our deliberations.

Let me recall in that context that according to the compromise worked out under your able chairmanship, Sir, it was understood that consideration of item 10 would be in a preliminary stage during the present session of the Disarmament Commission and that the Consultation Group would not engage in any negotiations on a text on the subject.

The report of the Consultation Group will be adopted in a short procedural meeting on 24 May.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies for their progress reports and their co-operation in conducting the work of the Commission.

Are there any comments?
Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): The United States delegation deeply regrets that in the course of today's proceedings the status of the consultations on agenda item 7, which you, Sir, have undertaken on your own responsibility, has again been represented as that of a subsidiary body of the Commission. I do not want to repeat the statement I made on this point in order to set the record straight at our plenary meeting last Tuesday. I have no choice, however, but to recall it at this time so there may be no further confusion in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: I take note of the statement of the representative of the United States. I think I made the situation clear by asking the co-ordinator of the Consultation Group on item 7 to report on behalf of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

As members may recall, at our last plenary meeting, held on 15 May, the Commission decided to hold an informal meeting of the Committee of the Whole in order to have a preliminary discussion on the question of the working agenda for our next substantive session, in 1991. Today, therefore, I wish to draw attention to that issue. Let me again emphasize that in my view it might be premature at this stage to consider any specific subject to be included in the Commission's agenda for next year. However, the Chair feels it could be the right time for the Commission to have a general discussion on the subject, on such aspects as the rationale or general criteria for selecting subject-matter to be included in its working agenda for next year. In any case, I wish to stress that our discussion at this stage should be limited to a general exchange of views on the issue, and should not broach the question of the selection of any specific subject for inclusion.
(The Chairman)

I wish to remind representatives that in accordance with the adopted ways and means for enhancing the functioning of the Disarmament Commission we have to make a final decision on this issue at the Commission’s organizational session early in December. Of course, extensive consultations could be held during the next few months and also during the forthcoming session of the General Assembly.

Following the adjournment of this meeting, a meeting of the Committee of the Whole will be convened.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.