DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 25 May 1979, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. VELLODI (India)

- Organization of work
- Consideration of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament (continued)

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79-70323
The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As we agreed at our last meeting, we are holding this meeting this morning primarily to receive a report from our Rapporteur, who has been chairing the meetings of the Working Group which we had set up. I shall therefore first call on him, after which we shall hear the statements of some delegations which have expressed the desire to speak briefly. We shall then adjourn the meeting, so that the Working Group can continue its work.

Mr. ORTEGUI (Argentina), Rapporteur (interpretation from Spanish): Between Monday, 21 May, and Wednesday, 23 May, the Working Group held four meetings attended by a large number of delegations. We were able at those meetings to identify and to agree on the titles of some of the elements to be included in a comprehensive programme of disarmament. The Working Group was also able to reach consensus on the categories of measures which would be included under what the Working Group termed "disarmament measures".

At its fourth meeting the Working Group decided to establish a Drafting Group open to the participation of all States. This Drafting Group worked all day yesterday and will continue to work today and next week. Its main purpose is to try and reconcile the various viewpoints of delegations so as to be in a position to submit first to the Working Group, which would in turn submit to the Disarmament Commission, draft recommendations and a draft report to the General Assembly generally acceptable to the members of the Commission.

Bearing in mind the spirit and the climate of co-operation and friendship prevailing in the work of both Groups, I am firmly convinced — and I earnestly hope — that in our next report to the Commission we shall be able to submit positive results agreed upon by consensus.
The CHAIRMAN: I believe that most of the members present in the room are also participating in the meetings of the Working Group and of the Drafting Group to which the Rapporteur just made reference. Therefore, all members should be aware of the progress being made — which is perhaps not fast enough. We shall today be completing two weeks of our session, and we have thus reached the half-way mark. I am not sure whether the Working Group of the Drafting Group will be meeting on Monday, but presumably not, which means that we shall have only four days next week. It was my hope, and it is still my hope, that the findings and conclusions of the Working Group will be available to the Commission by the end of next week, so that we can start their consideration and finalize our report during the last week of our session, that is, the week beginning 1 June.
I do not believe that it is necessary or advisable for me to go into any of the substantive points that have come up in the Working Group. As the Rapporteur himself said, we have every reason to believe that the work will continue satisfactorily and that he will be able to complete the work of the Group by the end of next week.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF DISARMAMENT (continued)

Mr. Lidgard (Sweden): As I said in my statement last week, it was our intention to return with a few comments on one of the specific questions, namely, that regarding machinery.

We have observed with great interest that the proposal of the non-aligned countries in dealing with verification takes into account the institutional aspects, not only of verification but also of the international disarmament process as a whole.

The need for an international machinery for disarmament verification within the United Nations system is stressed. It is suggested by the non-aligned countries that in the elaboration of such machinery, inter alia, the proposals on a United Nations agency for the verification of disarmament agreements, a world disarmament authority and an international satellite monitoring agency should be taken into account.

As I stated earlier, my delegation strongly supports consideration of this matter when elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament are negotiated.

In the history of disarmament negotiations a number of proposals were made for the creation of an international institution for controlling disarmament. The joint statement of the United States and the Soviet Union in 1961 on agreed principles for disarmament negotiations contains a proposal for an international disarmament organization within the framework of the United Nations charged with the task of implementing control over and inspection of disarmament. The two draft treaties of general and complete disarmament, which were presented in 1962 by the super-Powers, contained the same proposal. But the idea faded away with the inconclusive negotiations on these drafts in the years thereafter.

However, the idea of a jointly organized verification agency has come back time and again. In 1972 the delegations of the Netherlands, Sweden and Yugoslavia made separate but similar proposals in Geneva for a verification institution regarding chemical disarmament. These proposals were further elaborated in 1973. Japan has also made similar proposals in the Committee on the Conference on Disarmament.
The question has more recently been brought up by several delegations, including the Netherlands, in the preparation of the special session devoted to disarmament and in a carefully reasoned statement by the Netherlands delegation in the debate in the First Committee last autumn.

The view has been expressed here that we cannot have verification for the sake of verification. First, there must be something to verify. We fully agree with that view as well as with the statement that the scope and nature of verification should depend upon the scope, nature and specific characteristics of the concrete measures provided for in the disarmament agreements. It is precisely when we are elaborating a comprehensive programme on disarmament that we are in the best position to judge in a comprehensive way the institutional requirements for the verification, even if these requirements do not exist today but may do in the future, within the range of our programme.

There are, however, international institutional requirements in the disarmament process other than those caused by verification. Some of them are the following: the servicing of support to intergovernmental deliberations and negotiations; the provision of the necessary information both to the deliberative and negotiating organs and to the public; the registration and monitoring of disarmament agreements and measures, including the preparation and holding of periodic review conferences; and, finally, studies and research with respect both to arms development and effects and to disarmament and arms limitation. This would lead in the direction of an institution with wide functions, an organization within the framework of the United Nations system dealing exclusively with questions of disarmament. This was also proposed by several delegations during preparations for the special session devoted to disarmament, as is mentioned in the non-aligned working paper.

It is of importance that, when such a body is considered, two questions should be given adequate attention. The first concerns the status of an international disarmament organization. Its status should depend on two indispensable considerations: that it be intergovernmental and that it be a special body. It should, moreover, be within the United Nations system and report directly to the General Assembly. The second question concerns the need for a sizable funding in order for the organization to undertake work of recognized importance to member States. Its functions must not be allowed to falter for lack of funds.
My delegation does not intend to submit any concrete proposals for the establishment of an international disarmament organization now. We shall, we hope, have ample opportunity to return to the matter, both here and in other disarmament forums. However, we find it important that, when the United Nations Disarmament Commission considers elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the subject of an international disarmament organization be included. This should also be reflected in our report to the General Assembly.

Mr. van BUUREN (Netherlands): I should like to make a brief statement in strong support of the statement that has just been made by the representative of Sweden. He very graciously referred to the various efforts and suggestions that my delegation has made in the past, starting in 1972, and more recently during the special session last year, and he also referred to my delegation's statement in the First Committee during the last session of the General Assembly.

I should like to say here that we stand by what we had then proposed, and my delegation would like to take this opportunity, while this Commission is in the process of discussing elements for a comprehensive programme of disarmament, to urge that institutional requirements be studied during the elaboration of that programme here and in Geneva.
Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): On behalf of a number of States, my delegation introduced a few days ago in the Working Group a working paper entitled "Elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament". That working paper has now been distributed as document A/CN.10/8 to all members of the Disarmament Commission.

With regard to our working paper, we take the position that it should be treated on the same level and same footing as all the other working papers which have been introduced so far. I have already made a similar statement in the Working Group when introducing our working paper A/CN.10/8.

My delegation shares the hope expressed by the Chairman of the Drafting Group this morning that it will be possible to agree within the various groups, on a referendum basis, on formulations which would then be submitted to the Working Group and plenary meeting for further consideration and decision.

I should like to underline the understanding of my own and a number of other delegations that the final decisions on wording, arrangements or substance of the elements of a comprehensive disarmament programme can only be taken in the plenary meeting.

Mr. GOONERATNE (Sri Lanka): I had not intended to speak at this time, but after listening to the very interesting and very important statement made by Mr. Lidgard I thought I should, on behalf of my delegation, at least say that we very much appreciate the very important statement he has made. He referred to the non-aligned document and to particular suggestions we made regarding machinery, and we very much appreciate the support given to that idea. In fact, on the question of machinery, there was a proposal made by Sri Lanka at the special session on disarmament, which is one of many proposals on machinery. A similar proposal has been made, and was referred to, by the representative of the Netherlands. This statement by Mr. Lidgard contains very valuable details which we shall look into, but I should like to say that we strongly support the suggestion he made towards the end of his speech that the subject of an international disarmament organization should be included and reflected in a report to the General Assembly.
Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): With regard to the statement made by the representative of Sweden, I should like to make the following clarifications. The representative of Sweden said that the Soviet Union had proposed the establishment of an international disarmament organization. He then referred to principles agreed on and adopted by the Soviet Union and by the United States, and to a draft agreement on general and complete disarmament submitted in 1972 by the Soviet Union. Those two references are quite correct, but I should like nevertheless to recall that in both cases the disarmament organization to be established was proposed within the context of general and complete disarmament. The second reference to a treaty on general and complete disarmament is obvious and self-explanatory. However, in his reference to the agreed Soviet-American principles, we did not understand him completely, and I should therefore like to quote from document UNDC/5 of 12 March 1972, which contains the principles agreed on by the Soviet Union and the United States. Quite clearly, the Swedish representative had in mind paragraph 6 of that document, and I must say in that connexion that, taken as a whole, the Soviet-American principles were agreed on with a view to the preparation of a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

At the time when general and complete disarmament is undertaken, there will have to be very detailed control, and the character and scope of that control will depend on the need for verification of disarmament measures at each stage. That phase will be followed by a second phase involving the establishment of an international disarmament organization. In that case also the proposal was the establishment of an international disarmament organization in the context of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the delegation of France, I wish merely to recall the position of my Government, which is well known, concerning the importance of problems of verification. In this regard, we have heard with great interest the statement made by the representative of Sweden, as well as the statement by our colleague from the Netherlands. I should like to add that we attach great importance to the views submitted in the document which was introduced by the group of non-aligned
countries, and I should like to express our appreciation of that document which contains so many useful elements, in particular with regard to the point I have just mentioned. I hope that it will be possible for the Commission to draw up recommendations in keeping with the views contained in that document.

Mr. JEZIL (Czechoslovakia): A few days ago I had the honour of introducing, on behalf of the majority of the East European socialist countries, document A/CH.10/7. On behalf of the sponsors of the said document, I should like to stress our belief that that document, which was introduced in the Working Group, will receive the same treatment and will be valued as if it had been introduced in the plenary meeting of the Disarmament Commission.
Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria): Mr. Chairman, my delegation listened with great interest to the statement made this morning by the Swedish representative. At this stage we would like to express our general support for the contents of his statement. I should also like to recall that in the statement my delegation made last week, we already expressed the view that the comprehensive programme should contain provisions for adequate international organizational and institutional arrangements concerning the implementation of disarmament measures and, furthermore, that the United Nations system should assume an essential role and responsibility in this field.

We also feel that such an involvement of the United Nations system in the process of implementation and verification of disarmament agreements would facilitate the participation of all parties in the verification process. It is for these general reasons that I should like to express the hope that it will be possible in the comprehensive programme for disarmament to include some reference to this very important question.

Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): Mr. Chairman, I quite agree with what has been said regarding the role of the United Nations Organization. The cause of disarmament is most important in every aspect, especially verification. I should also like to stress the significance of international security through the United Nations as a necessary and indispensable measure in any progress towards effective disarmament. There is of course reference to this matter in the programme, but I would like to emphasize that the role of the United Nations in international security, apart from a balance of weapons or so-called balance of power, is an indispensable element in disarmament. The Working Group should therefore bear in mind that international security measures must be duly undertaken.

I should also like to refer to the measures which tend to help halt the arms race. The Working Group must bear in mind that all measures that tend to halt the arms race should be given priority. In this sense, as already mentioned, the completion of the test-ban Treaty, the halting of nuclear weapons tests, must be a primary consideration. What we ultimately
want to have is a ban on all nuclear tests, but primary attention should be given to a nuclear weapons test ban. This must be our first consideration.

With regard to the agreement reached in the Working Group on a nuclear test ban, to which I was a party, it should be understood that in the various stages of this nuclear test ban a nuclear weapons test ban will have priority.

The CHAIRMAN: Our next meeting is provisionally scheduled for Friday 1 June, if progress in the Working Group permits.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.