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A/CN.10/PV.26
13 May 1980

ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 13 May 1980, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. VELLODI

(India)

Agenda item 4:

- (a) Consideration of various aspects of the arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, in order to expedite negotiations aimed at effective elimination of the danger of nuclear war
- (b) Consideration of the agenda items contained in section II of resolution 33/71 H, with the aim of elaborating, within the framework and in accordance with the priorities established at the tenth special session, a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 4

- (a) CONSIDERATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE ARMS RACE, PARTICULARLY THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE AND NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT, IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT EFFECTIVE ELIMINATION OF THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WAR
- (b) CONSIDERATION OF THE AGENDA ITEMS CONTAINED IN SECTION II OF RESOLUTION 33/71 H, WITH THE AIM OF ELABORATING, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED AT THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION, A GENERAL APPROACH TO NEGOTIATIONS ON NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT

The CHAIRMAN: As agreed at our meeting yesterday, we are commencing this afternoon the general exchange of views on item 4 of our agenda.

I indicated yesterday that I, as Chairman, would see no difficulty if members wishing to do so were to make references in their statements to, in particular, item 3, on which we are not having a separate exchange of views.

I should like to mention one other matter at this point - that is, the sparsity of speakers for the next few days. At the moment, there are 18 speakers for meetings between this afternoon and Friday morning. It is my hope that Friday afternoon can be reserved for the first meeting of the working group we have agreed to establish to consider item 3. Therefore, it is important that there be as many speakers as possible at the plenary meetings tomorrow, Thursday, and Friday morning. This afternoon we shall hear the representative of China, and possibly one other speaker. At the moment there are only six speakers for the whole day tomorrow. Moreover, I have been approached by some delegations with a request that time be provided for them tomorrow morning to have consultations on some of the item on the agenda. Hence, since the six representatives who wish to speak tomorrow will be able to do so at one meeting, in the afternoon, it is my intention, if members agree, to cancel tomorrow morning's meeting. At the plenary meeting tomorrow afternoon we

(The Chairman)

shall continue the general exchange of views on item 4, as we shall do on Thursday also, when we have speakers for both the morning and the afternoon.

Again in order to expedite our work, I should like to close the list of speakers in the general exchange of views on item 4 at 5 p.m. tomorrow. We would ask delegations wishing to take part in that general exchange of views to inscribe their names on the list of speakers before 5 p.m. tomorrow so that at the close of tomorrow afternoon's meeting, I shall be in a position to indicate, on the basis of the number of names on the list of speakers, our programme of work for the next three or four days - and, in particular, whether the general exchange of views can be completed by Friday forenoon or will have to spill over into next week.

Having made those observations, I now call on the representative of China.

Mr. LAI Yali (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Sir, I am very happy to see you continue as Chairman of our Commission for the present session. This fact itself is sufficient evidence of the Member States' appreciation of the positive results achieved under your chairmanship during the last session. It is my hope that under your experienced guidance this session will make a valuable contribution towards fulfilling the desire of the people of the world to safeguard peace, to oppose aggression and to promote genuine disarmament.

According to the agenda we have adopted, important items such as those on the elements of a draft resolution entitled "Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade" and on a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament will be discussed at the present session. The Chinese delegation would like to make some comments on the relevant questions on the agenda.

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Over the years, the third-world and other peace-loving countries and many people both within and outside the United Nations, and the people of the world, have made unremitting efforts towards disarmament out of a genuine desire to safeguard world peace and security. Ten years ago, as a result of their initiatives, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring the 1970s as the Disarmament Decade.

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It was hoped that adherence to the aims and purposes of the Decade would help to reduce the level of arms in the world, stabilize the international situation, safeguard international peace and strengthen the independence and security and promote the economic development of countries. Ten years have now elapsed. Recalling the past and looking at the present, people cannot but say with profound regret that their hopes have come to naught. In the world today, compared with 10 years ago, the level of arms is rising sharply instead of decreasing; the situation is even more turbulent instead of being more stable; international peace is being subjected to even greater threats instead of being more secure; the independence and security of countries are being infringed upon and undermined in an increasingly serious manner instead of being strengthened. The root cause of people's disappointment is the frenzied arms expansion and war preparations of the two super-Powers. As the requirements of their rivalry for world hegemony dictate and disregarding the wish of the people of the world for disarmament, the two super-Powers have been increasing their military budgets every year and continuously expanding their arsenals. The military expenditure of those two countries accounts for more than two thirds of that of the whole world.

It must be pointed out that, over a long period, that super-Power which has been shouting disarmament slogans the loudest has all along taken the lead in arms expansion and war preparations. In the last 10 years or so its strategic arms have increased many fold, moving it from an inferior position to that of parity with the other super-Power; its arsenal of conventional weapons has swollen out of all proportion, providing tens of thousands of tanks and war planes for its army that is over 4.4 million strong. Backed by its powerful armaments, it has been flagrantly pursuing a policy of aggression and expansion in the world over the years and has gone to every extreme in its tactics. The facts have undeniably shown that, far from being a decade of disarmament, the last 10 years have been a decade of frenzied arms expansion and war preparations and of unbridled aggression and expansion by the super-Powers. The third-world and other small and medium-sized countries have waged a struggle in the face of such a reality. As a result of their efforts and initiatives there have been some new developments in the struggle for

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disarmament: a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to the question of disarmament was convened for the first time in the history of the United Nations; the Final Document was adopted; and certain reforms have been made in the disarmament machinery within the United Nations system. All these developments reflect the desire of the third-world and other peace-loving countries for genuine disarmament and should help to further the work of the Second Disarmament Decade.

As we enter the first year of the 1980s and give serious thought to the lessons of history in our endeavour to formulate effective measures for the Second Disarmament Decade, no one will fail to notice a grim reality which has aroused deep concern throughout the world - Soviet armed aggression against Afghanistan. Pressed by the need to intensify its aggression and expansion on a global scale in its quest for hegemony, the Soviet Union sent in an army of 100,000 to occupy by force of arms a non-aligned sovereign Islamic State. This is an ominous development of the social-imperialist policy of aggression it has been pursuing over the years. Over a year ago, with the same objective in mind, it brazenly supported the Vietnamese regional hegemonists in the armed invasion of Democratic Kampuchea. To this day, the Vietnamese authorities have refused to withdraw their troops, in violation of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly and in defiance of the just demand of the people of the world. They are continuing with their military occupation of Democratic Kampuchea and the brutal campaign of encirclement and suppression against the Kampuchean people, including the barbarous use of chemical and toxic weapons. Now, a year later, Soviet acts of aggression and expansion have reached a new and serious level as a result of the sharp escalation from wars by proxy to open and direct involvement. The latest act of aggression by the Soviet Union is a open defiance of the norms of international relations, a gross trampling on the principles of the United Nations Charter, a most damaging breach of international peace and a serious threat to the independence and security of countries. People vigorously demand the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of Soviet invading forces from Afghanistan. However, the Soviet Union, that traditionally self-styled standard-bearer of "disarmament" and

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"detente", has turned a deaf ear to the voice of justice of the people of the world. In spite of the fact that both the sixth emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly and the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Islamic Countries had adopted resolutions calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet troops, Soviet leaders proceeded to sign a treaty with Afghanistan for the so-called "temporary stationing" of Soviet troops in that country, in an attempt to legalize the Soviet armed invasion of Afghanistan so as to perpetuate Soviet armed occupation there. That is a rabid challenge to the public opinion of the entire world.

The fact that the Soviet Union is willing to face universal condemnation and that it throws down one challenge after another to the cause of world peace shows that its ambition far exceeds a single "Afghanistan". The situation is very clear: once the Soviet Union gains a foothold in Afghanistan, it could reach Iran to the west, Pakistan to the east and the Indian Ocean to the south; and it could surround the Persian Gulf, encroach on the Middle East oil resources, control the strategic sea lanes and cut off the energy lifeline of the West. When that happens, the thrust of Soviet aggression will not only bring catastrophe to the countries and peoples of the region, but will also create endless troubles for international peace and security. When we are discussing the forthcoming Disarmament Decade and are about to formulate a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament, such a major question with a bearing on the over-all situation must not, of course, be ignored.

Recent developments have made it increasingly clear that, with the intensification of the rivalry for world hegemony between the two super-Powers, the danger of a world war is growing, and so is the likelihood of local wars. The 1980s are going to be a decade fraught with crises and turbulence. In their struggle to achieve disarmament and to safeguard world peace, the people of the world must heighten their vigilance strengthen their unity and persevere in their efforts. Only by closely linking the long-range objectives of the Disarmament Decade with the struggle to defend world peace and oppose wars of aggression will it be possible to prevent a recurrence of the mistakes of the last Disarmament Decade.

In his letter of 11 April to the Secretary-General, Mr. Gromyko of the Soviet Union submitted 23 proposals for the Disarmament Decade of the 1980s. When the written proposals of the Soviet Union are compared with its activities, the discrepancy between its words and deeds becomes really shocking. In addition to the aforementioned increase of its strategic armaments many fold in the last 10 years, from the middle of the 1960s onwards, its tanks have increased by more than 15,000, its artillery pieces of various types by nearly 10,000, its major naval vessels by over 100 and the total tonnage of its warships by close to 1 million tons; and in recent years, close to 40 surface vessels and 7 submarines have been launched almost annually. Such a spectacular speed of arms expansion and its endless preaching of "disarmament" form a most striking contrast indeed.

It is noteworthy that for some time now, in open defiance of the norms of international law and of the United Nations Charter, Soviet mass media have been playing up the policy of position of strength, stressing the need to keep the "gunpowder dry" and serving notice that in the name of certain so-called assistance it is permissible to launch aggression by the use of force. This is a further exposure of the hypocritical nature of its sham détente and sham disarmament.

As regards some of Mr. Gromyko's proposals, they are being violated and undermined by none other than the Soviet Union itself. For example, while clamouring for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, it continues to dispatch massive forces to the Indian Ocean in its rivalry with the

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other super-Power for hegemony. Its armed aggression against Afghanistan has even more seriously undermined peace and stability in the Indian Ocean region and is a direct threat to the independence and security of the countries there. In short, no matter how sweet-sounding or high-sounding they are, such tongue in cheek proposals can serve no useful purpose and will contribute nothing to the achievement of genuine disarmament. We would rather offer a piece of advice to the Soviet representative: "If you really want to do something for disarmament and détente and render a service to the lasting peace you so often talk about, instead of saying a lot of things, you should just withdraw immediately and unconditionally all your troops from Afghanistan and desist from supporting Viet-Nam in its aggression against Democratic Kampuchea. Otherwise, no one will believe you even if you come up with more proposals."

As regards the main elements of the draft resolution on the Second Disarmament Decade, the Chinese delegation is prepared to consult and discuss with the representatives of the third world and other peace-loving countries in a spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding.

In our opinion, during the Second Disarmament Decade, it is necessary to draw a lesson from the past when very little was achieved in the field of disarmament as a result of super-Power monopoly. The third world and other small and medium-sized countries must play a greater role and have much more say in disarmament matters, so as to exert a powerful pressure of just public opinion on the super-Powers, particularly that super-Power which is engaged in intensified aggression and expansion, to begin reducing their armaments in earnest.

The aim of the Second Disarmament Decade is to formulate fair and reasonable disarmament principles and practical and feasible measures so that progress in genuine disarmament would help the people of various countries in their struggle to eliminate the danger of a new world war, to oppose all acts of armed aggression and expansion and to safeguard world peace and security.

The draft resolution on the Disarmament Decade should help the people of various countries in their defence of State sovereignty and national

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independence and promote adherence to the principles of mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. No country should be allowed to seek any form of hegemony in any region of the world, or to engage in interference, subversion, control, or aggression against others. All invading forces must be withdrawn immediately, unconditionally and totally from the territory of others to their own.

The two countries which possess the largest arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons must undertake to be the first to reduce their armaments. When they have drastically reduced their nuclear and conventional armaments to a point where the huge gap between them and the other nuclear countries and militarily significant States has basically disappeared, these last should then join them in reducing armaments according to a reasonable ratio.

We also believe that the draft resolution on the Disarmament Decade should explicitly provide that all nuclear countries unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries and nuclear-free zones, and that agreements on the prohibition of the research, production and use of all chemical and toxic weapons and on the destruction of existing stock-piles of such weapons be concluded through negotiations as soon as possible.

These are some of the preliminary observations of the Chinese delegation on the draft resolution on the Second Disarmament Decade and on a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament that we wish to put to the Commission for its consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: I had hoped that we might have at least one other speaker this afternoon, but I understand that the representative of Cyprus would prefer to speak at a later stage.

As I indicated at the beginning of the meeting, tomorrow we shall have one meeting, in the afternoon, and we shall close the list of speakers for the general exchange of views on item 4 tomorrow at 5 p.m.

I call on the representative of Viet Nam, who wishes to make a brief statement at this time.

Mr. CU DINH BA (Viet Nam): My delegation has no intention of engaging in any polemics at this session of the Disarmament Commission. However, we have heard the representative of China make slanderous allegations against my country. My delegation categorically rejects those slanders, and we reserve our right to express our views at a later stage.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.