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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 4 June 1980, at 8 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. VELLODI

(India)

Statement by the Chairman

Agenda item 5: (continued)

- (a) Harmonization of views on concrete steps to be undertaken by States regarding a gradual agreed reduction of military budgets and reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries, noting the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly
- (b) Examination and identification of effective ways and means of achieving agreements to freeze, reduce or otherwise restrain, in a balanced manner, military expenditures, including adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned

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The meeting was called to order at 8.35 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: When this afternoon's plenary meeting adjourned, we had completed the first reading of the Chairman's paper on item 4 (a) and (b), contained in document A/CN.10/CRP.8/Rev.1. A large number of proposals, changes, amendments, and so on, were submitted. It is therefore my intention that we should continue the consideration of item 4 after this evening's plenary meeting, in an informal group. I would request those delegations that are particularly concerned about this paper, and especially the delegations that have submitted suggestions for changes in the draft, to meet with me in such an informal group.

At the present plenary meeting we shall take up item 5. The draft report that came out at the end of the informal discussions on that item was presented to us by Mr. Sucharipa. Thus, any delegations who wish to speak on item 5 at a plenary meeting may do so at this time. Thereafter - particularly in view of the fact that the draft recommendations in document A/CN.10/CRP.10/Add.1 contain sets of square brackets - it will be necessary to have informal consultations. I would suggest that they be held at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. It is my hope that after the informal consultations we may be able to agree on the language for the recommendations on item 5.

To sum up, we shall now have a formal, plenary discussion of the draft recommendations contained in document A/CN.10/CRP.10 and Add.1. After that we shall adjourn and have an informal meeting to go through the Chairman's paper on item 4. I would hope that we could complete the consideration of item 4, it being understood that the results of the informal consultations on the Chairman's paper will be faithfully reported to a plenary meeting tomorrow morning. That seems to me to be the only practical way of proceeding with our work.

AGENDA ITEM 5 (continued)

- (a) HARMONIZATION OF VIEWS ON CONCRETE STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY STATES REGARDING A GRADUAL AGREED REDUCTION OF MILITARY BUDGETS AND REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES NOW BEING USED FOR MILITARY PURPOSES TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, NOTING THE RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- (b) EXAMINATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTIVE WAYS AND MEANS OF ACHIEVING AGREEMENTS TO FREEZE, REDUCE OR OTHERWISE RESTRAIN, IN A BALANCED MANNER, MILITARY EXPENDITURES, INCLUDING ADEQUATE MEASURES OF VERIFICATION SATISFACTORY TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED

Mr. PEARSON (Canada): I wish to summarize briefly the position of my delegation and the delegations of some other countries in connexion with document A/CN.10/CRP.10/Add.1, entitled "Draft recommendations on agenda items 5 (a) and (b)".

I want, first of all, to thank Mr. Sucharipa for his efforts to find a consensus recommendation on our behalf, and to extend to him my sympathy. He did his best.

The group of countries on behalf of which I introduced conference room paper 7 were simply trying to build on the work already done in the United Nations on this subject and persuade the Commission to carry it further. Accordingly, we suggested that in our recommendations we ask the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to study the matter further, and ask United Nations Member States to co-operate with him for this purpose, given the fact that very few have been able to do so up to now. Finally, we asked that the Assembly request the Disarmament Commission to consider how to work out the principles of a declaration.

We were not able to obtain agreement on those proposals, and the Chairman therefore produced the text with the bracketed clauses which is before the Commission. The text that he drafted is acceptable as it stands, without the brackets, to my delegation and, I think, to others for which I spoke previously.

(Mr. Pearson, Canada)

It is not what we wanted; indeed, it is far from what we proposed. In fact, the only reference to our first two points is the following statement:

"the Disarmament Commission recommends that the General Assembly: after examining the present report as well as the report of the ad hoc panel on military budgeting ..."

and so on. That reference to the ad hoc panel is the only one which in any way covers the points we wished to make. Nevertheless, we are willing to accept it as at least some reflection of what we wished to accomplish.

However, one or two delegations have not been prepared up to now to accept that first bracketed phrase, and if it is to be omitted from the recommendation nothing will remain of what we proposed except a somewhat different formulation of the work of the Disarmament Commission in the general area of principles. In our view, the recommendation without the first bracketed phrase would be unbalanced, and we cannot accept the further reference, at the end of the paragraph, beginning with the words "and in particular to identify and elaborate on the principles" and ending "at a later stage". We believe that these two concepts or ideas are linked and must form a balance, one with the other. That is why we asked that the phrase at the end of the paragraph, beginning with "and in particular" be put in brackets.

We regret this outcome. I think we have shown goodwill, in the sense that we are not asking for what we originally requested and would be content with the simple reference to the report of the ad hoc panel - which is, as far as we can see, a statement of fact. There will be such a report, although it will be made by the Secretary-General, and the Assembly, presumably, will consider it.

I do not wish to speak to the sub-bracketed phrase, which is not part of our general bracketed phrases but is the responsibility of another delegation.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): We believe that the draft recommendation submitted to us is the result of a good deal of work and represents an outcome which, although far from satisfying us, constitutes a basis which is capable of improvement and could enable us to carry out the task assigned to the Commission - that is, to identify effective ways and means of achieving agreements to reduce military budgets.

I should like to thank Mr. Sucharipa, who demonstrated great commitment, a sense of balance and a constructive spirit in the difficult task entrusted to him.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

For the Romanian delegation, I must say with regret that the draft recommendations, in their present form are far from satisfactory and far from reflecting the ideas and objectives which it considers most important and which, consequently, should occupy a more prominent place than that allotted to them in the present draft.

Nevertheless, with a view to contributing to the achievement of agreement, to arriving at the consensus which I have no doubt is desired by all of us, my delegation is prepared to accept the final part of the draft as formulated by the Chairman and as it appears in the addendum which has been distributed to us. At the same time, we must face the fact that there are still divergent views. In those circumstances, I should like to suggest and request that we be allowed more time for reflection and consultations which we hope will help us finally to reach an agreement. I would add that my delegation has certain concrete proposals and suggestions with regard to this final part of the draft recommendations, which I believe that we shall be in a position to put before the Commission after further consultations.

In conclusion, I believe that by tomorrow morning we shall be in a position to continue our work with a better chance of success in completing the draft recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to assure the representative of Romania that for my part I am certainly prepared to allow all the time that I possibly can. However, since we have to try and complete our substantive work by tomorrow evening if we want to finish the session on Friday, I hope that the suggestion I made about having informal consultations tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock will lead to the results that we all hope we can achieve on agenda item 5.

Mr. HATTINGA van't SANT (Netherlands): When we received the present text of paragraphs 7 and 8, with brackets, it was a proposal by Mr. Sucharipa without those brackets. At that time my delegation expressed its unhappiness with this text in the Drafting Group. We thought that very important points were lacking, points which had been made by a number of Western delegations and also put forward in their working paper. No reference is made to an extension of the on-going study, which we consider desirable because, for instance, some States that would like to participate in the on-going study have not had the time to react to the proposed matrix. Secondly, we thought that a request to countries to participate in the on-going study at a later stage was lacking.

However, when we realized that only Mr. Sucharipa's text could provide an attainable compromise we dropped all our demands on these points. We did not insist on a formulation on an extension of the study; we did not insist on a request for the participation of all the countries concerned; and, finally, we declared our readiness to accept the text as it is now, with the brackets, as a compromise formula.

On the other hand, unfortunately, one delegation insisted on the deletion of any reference to the report of the ad hoc panel on military budgeting, that is, to an on-going study. We found that position incomprehensible. The delegation that insisted on the deletion of the reference to the on-going study did not vote against the study when the matter came up at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly; it merely abstained. Secondly, it was our impression that deletion of the reference to an on-going study would imply a recommendation to the General Assembly not to take into account the results of a study which the General Assembly itself had requested. Thirdly, the Netherlands

(Mr. Hattinga van't Sant, Netherlands)

attaches great importance to progress in the field of the reduction of military budgets, and we think that no progress can be made in this field without taking into account the results of this on-going study.

We are still prepared to accept the text as it is, without brackets. We can even agree to the suggestion made by the representative of France in the Drafting Group to add a sentence after the mention of resolution 33/67 saying: "taking into account the different positions of States in this field". Even that would be acceptable. But, if some delegations continue to insist on the deletion of any reference in our report to an on-going study, which is closely connected with the work we are doing, I cannot commit my delegation and my Government to anything beyond the continuance of our discussion at the next session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Our representative has already had an opportunity, at the meetings of the Disarmament Commission and in the Working Group which dealt with the consideration of agenda item 5 (a) and (b), to put forward the position of the Soviet Union on this item.

At the present time, I should like to reiterate in summary that position and the reasons underlying it.

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

First of all I should like to say that we attach great importance to the initiative of the Socialist Republic of Romania. The Soviet delegation supports that initiative in principle, because it reflects the over-all position of the socialist countries, which believe that it is necessary to implement the proposal on the qualitative reduction of the military budgets of States, and as a first step to freeze those budgets. That position of the socialist countries is clearly set forth in the Declaration of the Warsaw meeting of States parties to the Warsaw Treaty. That position was our guide in discussing the reduction of military budgets.

When, at this session of the Disarmament Commission, the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Romania put forward its proposal, we believed that it would be useful if the United Nations Disarmament Commission were to adopt it in principle and were to recommend to the General Assembly that it consider it and then request the Commission at its next substantive session to elaborate the basic elements of the draft declaration. It seems to us that at the meetings of the Working Group real efforts were made to find a common formula for recommendations to the Commission on this item, and during that work a very constructive role was played by the Chairman of the Working Group, to whose efforts we should pay a deserved tribute. However, the text we now have before us - the text of the draft recommendations on agenda items 5 (a) and (b) - is not satisfactory to us in every part. To be brief, I would say that we cannot accept the text in the first square brackets, which deals with the report of the ad hoc panel on military budgeting. In the discussion of this particular question at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly, the Soviet delegation adopted a very clear-cut position on the preparation of such a report, and we still adhere to that position. Therefore the text I have mentioned, that in the first square brackets, cannot be accepted by us. Everything that follows that text is acceptable to us, and we would be prepared to drop the next set of square brackets. Of course, if constructive work is to be continued on this, perhaps we might have some amendments of detail, but I would like to say that, over all, this draft is acceptable to us.

It seems to me that the insistence of delegations on the inclusion of the amendment contained in the first square brackets is not really justified, because

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

in the proposal for a declaration submitted by the delegations of Romania and Sweden one initiative is talked about. The report of the ad hoc panel was not considered by us, and it is not ready. These are entirely separate questions, and the inclusion of any provision on the report is absolutely inappropriate. That, in brief, is the position of our delegation on the question we are now considering.

In conclusion I should like to express our regret that because of the position adopted by some States serious proposals relating to the problem of reducing the military budgets of States within the Disarmament Commission have not yet been usefully developed and furthered.

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): First of all I should like to thank Mr. Sucharipa for his efforts as Chairman of the informal meeting of the Drafting Group on this item. We think that the work was carried out in a very effective way, thanks to Mr. Sucharipa's leadership. We also think that as regards the recommendations his draft constitutes a realistic approach to a compromise on the different positions that have been expressed on this matter.

I should like briefly to reiterate our position on this matter. We have all along expressed the need to intensify efforts to take measures to facilitate future negotiations on agreements on the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, and we think that in this regard the Secretary-General should be requested to continue to study the problems involved. At the same time efforts should be made to prepare for a political commitment in the form of a declaration. The balance between these two lines of action is essential to my delegation.

The draft recommendations in Conference Room Paper 10/Add.1 - with the brackets removed, of course - are far from what we had proposed and hoped for, but in the view of my delegation they represent the minimum we can find acceptable. As regards the reference to resolution 33/67, we think it is quite normal that the General Assembly should take into account a report in this field, a report that it has itself requested.

I would appeal to the delegations concerned to reconsider their positions in view of the fact that this draft, with the brackets removed, constitutes the

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

minimum that can be acceptable, in view of what has taken place in the discussions during the work on this item.

Mr. KATCHOURENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Under the leadership of the representative of Austria, the Working Group has carried out a great deal of work and, on the basis of the proposal of Romania and Sweden it has prepared the document we now have before us.

I do not want to undertake a detailed analysis of the entire document. I wish to dwell only on the parts contained in square brackets, especially that which speaks of the report of the ad hoc panel on military budgeting.

Some delegations are trying to convince us that without reference to that report we cannot get along. I should like to take up that assertion from a legal point of view. That report does not exist, as far as anyone knows. Now, who in this chamber can say what the content of the report will be since it does not yet exist? And finally, those who favour this proposal, are they prepared to sign a blank cheque? Our delegation is not prepared to do so.

Mr. PFEIFFER (Federal Republic of Germany): I just wanted to say that we, too, find the recommendation drafted by Mr. Sucharipa to whom we are very grateful for the work he has done in trying to bring about a consensus on this very important item of the agenda acceptable, although only a limited portion of our justified ideas and proposals could be taken into consideration. It is a rather distorted proposal that we now have before us as a result of the many brackets that have, unfortunately, been introduced; but, as was explained by the representative of the Netherlands, there is a story behind the brackets, and we now have the task of seeing how we can remove them.

The positions are known; there is no need to repeat them. We have, as the representative of Romania has said, the task of entering into consultations to find a way out of the impasse. Maybe, on the basis of the proposal made by the representative of France, Mr. de la Gorce, we could try to accommodate different views. When we accepted his proposal, which took into account the different positions of other countries as well, we thought that those delegations having different views might find their points covered. As I followed the discussion, only one or two delegations have said they could not accept the proposal that is contained in the first sentence of this draft. Therefore I think that some effort is needed to arrive at a compromise. Perhaps we could concentrate on this kind of formula and then see whether the rest can be accepted as formulated by Mr. Sucharipa, but of course without any brackets.

Mr. HEISBOURG (France) (interpretation from French): First of all, I should like to say that the French delegation appreciates fully the initiative taken by Romania and Sweden in proposing a working paper that contains several principles and proposals of great interest. We consider it unfortunate that it was not possible to reach a consensus that took into account more fully certain of those principles and proposals. We regret that there has been no consensus on the basis of the draft of the Chairman of the Drafting Group - which draft is nevertheless a long way from our original position. Those positions are known to the Commission; the French delegation has explained them on many occasions. However, the draft prepared by Mr. Sucharipa was and remains wholly acceptable. If the brackets in the recommendations are removed we shall have a text

(Mr. Heistbourg, France)

that appears to be well balanced and to reflect the existing situation. By mentioning resolution 33/67 and the report that will be submitted to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Drafting Group has referred only to things that exist or will exist. That report will certainly be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session. Also the fact that saying that the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly will consider that report seems to me to be something that is quite normal.

We regret that the delegations of some countries have not shown a spirit of compromise or taken a constructive attitude as have other delegations. We hope, in spite of everything, that in the coming hours those delegations will in fact be able to come closer to positions that are acceptable to all. In any case, as far as the French delegation is concerned it will do everything possible to enable a compromise to be reached.

We have proposed some formulas, which have been recalled here, and I hope that we shall have an opportunity to return to them. In any event, we believe that it would be a pity to reach a compromise without substance because, if we take the present draft and delete all the passages in brackets, we shall have wording that will no doubt be acceptable to the greatest number but will not contain any kind of new recommendation.

Mr. MARINESCU (Romania) (interpretation from French): I should like to express my regret at having been misunderstood when I made my brief comments. I did not intend at all to suggest that we could be satisfied with the text proposed by the Chairman of the Drafting Group without the words in brackets. I said that with the words in brackets the text would have been acceptable to the Romanian delegation although some of the ideas which it supported during the exchange of views and which were contained in the joint Swedish-Romanian working paper had not been sufficiently reflected in this addendum. To delete the bracketed language and content ourselves with the little that remains - and I apologize for making this comparison, but it is late and I cannot find a better expression - would be like contenting ourselves with a glass of water - not even fresh water, but stagnant water. It is not

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

the intention of the Romanian delegation to propose such a recommendation by way of a conclusion.

While I reserve the right of my delegation to submit proposals in a more detailed form, I would suggest, and it is only a suggestion, that we start out with the fact that we must - and I continue to believe that this is the wish of all of us - make a recommendation which has substance.

(Mr. Marinescu, Romania)

Secondly, given the proposals which have been made in the course of our debates, we should recommend to the General Assembly at its next session that it continue to consider those proposals. And, given the fact that it has been generally agreed that the paper by Sweden and Romania was a good basis for our work, as a large number of delegations mentioned during the exchange of views in the Working Group we should recommend that the proposals that are contained in that working paper also be considered at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly.

We could make that recommendation without entering into details and without specifying what those proposals are.

Those were the suggestions that I wanted to make. As I said, we hope to present them tomorrow in somewhat more detail.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to item 5, I hope that the informal consultations now under way will help us to achieve a generally acceptable draft on this item. I had suggested that we meet tomorrow at 9 a.m., but perhaps the informal consultations may not have been completed by then. So, unless the concerned delegations feel it would be useful to meet at 9 a.m., I personally do not see the necessity of it.

The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.