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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 9 December 1980, at 11 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. KOSTOV  
(Vice-Chairman)

(Bulgaria)

- Election of the Chairman and other members of the Bureau (continued)
- Other business

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The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: As members will recall, our consideration of this agenda item was not completed yesterday because consultations were still under way. I am now in a position to report that those consultations have been completed, and to propose that we proceed to elect a new Chairman.

Are there any comments?

Mr. NAMBIAR (India): Once again, at the outset I should like to express Mr. Vellodi's apologies for his inability to attend this session. On behalf of the delegation of India I might add that we are deeply thankful to the various delegations for their support and for the confidence they have reposed in the Chairman during the last two sessions. That co-operation has helped the United Nations Disarmament Commission complete the important tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, in particular the working out, last year, of the elements of a comprehensive programme of disarmament and, in May of this year, of the elements of the Declaration of the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade.

The performance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body has in our view by and large met the expectations of the Member States and has justified the decision to revive this body taken by the General Assembly at its first special session on disarmament. The fact that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has been scrupulously following the tradition of arriving at decisions by consensus is another important element which has added to its credibility and competence, as well as the continuing belief of Member States that it has performed and can perform useful functions in the field of disarmament.

At the present session of the General Assembly we have taken some important decisions relating to the preparations concerning the second special session on disarmament, and in particular the formation of a Preparatory Committee. We attach great importance to the successful working of the Preparatory Committee, and we hope that in its work the Disarmament

(Mr. Nambiar, India)

Commission will also contribute effectively to the all-round preparations for the second special session on disarmament.

In this connexion I have the honour and privilege to propose for the chairmanship of the 1981 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission the name of the representative of Denmark, Ambassador Peter Michaelsen. Ambassador Michaelsen was born in 1924, and he took a Degree of Master of Law at the University of Copenhagen in 1949. He entered the Danish Foreign Service in 1950, and has served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen and at diplomatic posts in Washington, Brussels, and Bonn. Most recently, from October 1976 to November 1980, he was Ambassador to Yugoslavia and Albania. Since November 1980 Mr. Michaelsen has been Special Adviser to the Danish Government on disarmament. Ambassador Michaelsen was also a member of the Danish delegation to the United Nations at its twenty-ninth session.

My delegation is fully confident that in commending the name of Ambassador Michaelsen for the chairmanship of the Commission we are reflecting the broad understanding of the various currents of opinion and positions within the United Nations Disarmament Commission and we are confident that in his exercise of the Chairmanship the Ambassador of Denmark would fully meet our expectations.

Mr. KAHN (German Democratic Republic): We second the candidacy of Ambassador Michaelsen of Denmark for the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for 1981. At the same time, we wish to indicate our interest in the exercising of that function by a representative of the Group of East European States in 1982.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no other statements or comments, Ambassador Peter Michaelsen of Denmark has been nominated for the post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1981. Since this is the only nomination, I propose that we proceed to elect the Chairman by acclamation. May I take it that this is the wish of the Commission?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I accordingly declare Ambassador Peter Michaelsen, the representative of Denmark, elected Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for the year 1981, and I extend to him my warmest congratulations and very best wishes. I call on the representative of Denmark.

Mr. MICHAELSEN (Denmark): I should like to express my sincere thanks to all delegations of this Commission for having elected me Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the year 1981. I know full well that it will be a difficult job to succeed Ambassador Vellodi, who during the two first years so ably has chaired the United Nations Disarmament Commission and guided its discussions and led and promoted the work with which it has had to deal.

Unfortunately, the international situation is burdened with many dangerous problems. We all know that our peoples follow the arms race with worries and fear and that their fundamental hope and longing is for peace and security. It is our duty to be guided by these sentiments and not only to seek but, through our constructive work, to find solutions to the problem with which we have to deal - disarmament. I express the hope that the spirit of co-operation will guide us all when we meet next spring for the Commission's substantive session.

(Mr. Michelsen, Denmark)

Finally -- and I think I speak on behalf of all members -- may I ask the representative of India through you, Mr. Chairman, to convey to Ambassador Vellodi our greetings and warmest thanks for his work in and for this Commission. I wish also to thank you, Sir, for having taken over the Chair to conduct our deliberations at this session.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to report that consultations among some regional Groups on the selection of their candidates for the Bureau have not yet been completed, and since those consultations are not expected to be concluded by the end of this session of the Commission, we have no choice but to postpone the election of the Vice-Chairmen to the next substantive session in 1981.

I wish also to report that there has been agreement among regional Groups on the election of the Rapporteur. Accordingly, I propose that we proceed to elect the Rapporteur. Are there any comments or suggestions?

Mr. ESPECHE GIL (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation wishes first of all to express its congratulations to the representative of Denmark on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations.

The purpose of my intervention is a cause of great pleasure for us, because we wish to propose the election of Mr. Mahmoud Karem, the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to the post of Rapporteur of this Commission.

Mr. Karem was born in Cairo on 26 August 1949. He is well known to those who are occupied with disarmament in this Organization. Our acquaintance with him has, of course, led to the high esteem in which he is held by his colleagues, which is a reflection of his personal qualities, his professional competence and his thorough knowledge of disarmament problems.

(Mr. Espeche Gil, Argentina)

In this connexion, it is fitting to recall his performance as a representative of his country in the First Committee during the last three sessions of the General Assembly and as Alternate Representative in the Plenary Assembly at the present session. Mr. Karem also represented Egypt in the Preparatory Committee for the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as well as in the session itself, and, since 1978, has represented it in this Commission.

It is precisely these great abilities which have led my delegation to nominate him as Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission, in the certainty that he will contribute with effectiveness and responsibility to the fulfilment of the important tasks which face this body.

The CHAIRMAN: Since there are no other nominations, Mr. Mahmoud Karem of Egypt has been nominated for election as Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission. Since that is the only nomination, may I take it that it is the wish of this Commission to elect him by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to extend my warmest personal congratulations to Mr. Mahmoud Karem of Egypt. I believe that the Commission has made a wise and good choice in electing him Rapporteur. I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. KAREM (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): First of all, I should like to say that I take pleasure in extending to the Ambassador of Denmark my most sincere congratulations on his election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and I wish also to express my belief that he will discharge his extremely sensitive duties in the best manner possible.

I am also happy to extend to you personally, Mr. Chairman, and to the friendly delegation of Bulgaria, our most sincere congratulations on the intense efforts which you have made in recent days in order to bring various points of view closer together and to ensure the progress we all wish to see in the Disarmament Commission that we may attain the desired objective - that is, total and complete disarmament.

Allow me to extend to Mr. Ortegui, my colleague and friend, my warmest thanks and to convey to him the gratitude of the Egyptian delegation for his great efforts as Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to thank Mr. Karem for the kind words addressed to me and to my delegation. I am certain that the new Chairman, assisted by the Rapporteur, will follow closely the consultations among the regional groups concerned with a view to seeing those consultations achieve positive results before the convening of the 1981 session of the Commission.

May I reiterate my best wishes and warmest congratulations to the new Chairman and Rapporteur and wish them success in conducting the business of the Commission together with the other members of the Bureau when they have been selected and assume their posts next year.

OTHER BUSINESS

The CHAIRMAN: We have now considered five items of our agenda. The remaining item is item 6, Other Business. Are there any questions or statements on that item?

Since there are none, we have concluded this short organizational session, and before we adjourn I should like to convey my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Vellodi for his leadership and wisdom in conducting the business of the Commission during the past two sessions, and to wish his successor the best of luck.

I declare this organizational session closed.

The meeting rose at 12 noon