DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 25 May 1982, at 11.10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. WYZNER (Poland)

- Draft report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly
  at its second special session devoted to disarmament

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session.

82-60609
The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

DRAFT REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS SECOND SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

The CHAIRMAN: Representatives will recall that at our 59th meeting on 18 May, we took a decision on the organization of our work and decided to establish two working groups: Working Group I dealing with (a) the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and (b) the nuclear plans and capability of South Africa; Working Group II dealing with (a) reduction of military budgets and (b) elaboration of a mandate for the study group on conventional disarmament. It was agreed that the working groups would consider the items allocated to them at meetings extending until Monday afternoon inclusive.

I understand that the Chairmen of the groups are now in a position to report to the Commission on the results of their work. I have followed the activities of the working groups and was informed by their respective chairmen about the progress they were making and I should like to extend to them my very warm congratulations on the hard work and achievements of the groups.

At a later stage, the Rapporteur will have the opportunity to outline to the Commission the way the various reports of the working groups will appear in the document prepared by the Secretariat - I refer to document CRP.1982/1 - containing the draft of the first three parts of the report of the Commission to the special session, in order to have the report include all the substantive sessions of the Commission, including the current one.

I shall now call on the representative of Yugoslavia, Mr. Dragomir Djokic, Chairman of the Subgroup concerning agenda items 4 (a) and 4 (b), to introduce its report.
Mr. DJOKIC (Yugoslavia): I am pleased to inform the Commission that the discussions on agenda items 4 (a) and 4 (b) on the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament have been satisfactorily concluded. The results are contained in Conference Room Paper 1982/4. Within the context of Working Group I, subgroup A held five meetings; in addition, I held extensive informal consultations with a significant number of delegations.

It was the general view in the subgroup that the time available did not permit substantive consideration of an item as important as the one in question. Therefore, it was agreed that, while bearing in mind the relevant part of the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 1981 session, that is, paragraph 19 of document A/36/42, our efforts should concentrate on the developments that have taken place since that session and up to the present. We adopted such an approach so that we could give a forward-looking thrust to our work, which we hoped would make a positive contribution to the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

It was agreed that our work should culminate in a short report dealing with subitems 4 (a), on various aspects of the arms race, and 4 (b), on a general approach to negotiations on nuclear and conventional disarmament, and contain a section on recommendations concerning the future role the Disarmament Commission can perform with regard to those specific subitems.

Paragraph 1 is an introductory one, and merely refers to the number of meetings held and states that the subgroup did not attempt an in-depth consideration of the substantive issues contained in agenda item 4.

The substantive part of the report of the subgroup starts with paragraph 2, which reflects the approach the subgroup adopted with respect to its work.

Paragraph 3 recalls the results of the Commission’s discussions as well as the views of various delegations on items 4 (a) and 4 (b) as contained in the Commission’s report to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

Paragraph 4 expresses concern over the deteriorating international situation and the continuing arms race, particularly in its nuclear aspect, and stresses the urgent need to improve international relations and for progress in disarmament.

Paragraph 5 takes stock of the developments in the field of disarmament activities since the 1981 session of the Commission, whether negative or positive.
Paragraph 6 calls upon all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to make every effort to facilitate speedy progress in the Committee on Disarmament.

Paragraph 7 stresses that all States have a vital interest in the achievement of nuclear and conventional disarmament and in the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race.

Paragraph 8 affirms the responsibilities of the various States in disarmament efforts, as set out in the Final Document.

Paragraph 9 emphasizes that in negotiations on nuclear disarmament the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States should be duly respected and urges the initiation and/or intensification of the appropriate negotiating processes. In this regard, it was stressed that the various types of negotiations should be perceived as not being exclusive, and that they may contribute to each other’s success. Finally, the importance of the second special session on disarmament was emphasized and the hope was expressed that Member States would contribute to its success.

Paragraph 10 contains the recommendation of the subgroup which, in essence, envisages a future role for the United Nations Disarmament Commission with regard to items 4 (a) and 4 (b) concerning the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

In addition to what is reflected in the report of the subgroup, a number of important matters were discussed in detail, but because of lack of consensus were not included in the report.

Foremost among those matters was the confirmation of the validity of the Final Document. Whereas some delegations held the view that it was appropriate, within the context of considering the future role of the Disarmament Commission, to reassert the general approach to disarmament contained in the Final Document, others, while they had no difficulty with such confirmation — in fact they thought it to be important — were however of the view that such confirmation should not be undertaken by the Commission. They argued that it should be undertaken by the forthcoming special session itself.
An equally important matter discussed extensively both in the subgroup and in informal consultations was whether the Disarmament Commission should be entrusted with specific tasks with regard to the comprehensive programme of disarmament and the various studies commissioned by the General Assembly. Some delegations felt that it was entirely appropriate for the Commission to suggest to the second special session on disarmament that the Commission be entrusted with the review of the programme and prepare recommendations to the General Assembly in this regard. Other delegations were of the view that, although that may be a position that the second special session on disarmament may eventually adopt, it was not for the Disarmament Commission to make recommendations in this regard. Those delegations felt that the issue of the review of the comprehensive programme of disarmament was going to be a matter for discussion at the special session and that thus no action should be taken to prejudice the outcome of such discussions.

Concerning the role of the Disarmament Commission with respect to the various studies, a number of delegations felt that the Commission can perform an important function in discussing these studies with a view to formulating concrete proposals for action by the General Assembly. Other delegations held the view that, although this might indeed be a viable proposition, it was, again, for the second special session on disarmament to recommend what should be done with these studies, as the General Assembly has already adopted a number of resolutions requesting the Secretary-General to transmit them to the second special session on disarmament.

On the other hand, a proposal was submitted calling for measures to apply the system of international security as expressly provided for in the United Nations Charter to be undertaken in parallel with measures towards disarmament. Although the value and importance of such a proposal were widely acknowledged by the subgroup, some delegations felt that because the proposal was submitted at the last meeting of the subgroup there was not sufficient time to discuss it. Accordingly, the subgroup was not able to give this proposal adequate consideration, and thus no concrete action was taken with regard to it.

In conclusion, I wish to express my deep appreciation to all those delegations which have participated in the work of the subgroup. My task was facilitated by the constructive approach and the spirit of accommodation that marked the
attitude with which the delegations tackled the issues considered by the subgroup. Finally, my special thanks go to the Secretary of the subgroup, Mr. Ramzy, for his valuable contribution and competent assistance during the work of the subgroup.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the representative of Bangladesh, Mr. Waliiur Rahman, Chairman of the subgroup concerning agenda item 9, to introduce the report of the subgroup.

Mr. RAHMAN (Bangladesh): I have the honour to inform members that, as mandated by the Disarmament Commission, subgroup B of Working Group I concerning agenda item 9, relating to the nuclear capability of South Africa, has had five meetings over the past few days. The subgroup held a fairly extensive exchange of views, but because of the divergence of the views and positions of delegations the subgroup could not reach any agreement.

In view of this, the subgroup has recommended in its report, which will be found in Conference Room Paper 1982/2 dated 24 May 1982, that the Commission continue consideration of the item at its next substantive session.
Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh)

The last phrase of paragraph 3 now appears in brackets in document CPF.1982/2. The brackets around that phrase, as well as the phrase "on the basis of", have now been removed. Moreover, I am glad to inform the Commission that, as a result of further consultations held by me with delegations concerned, the phrase "taking into account", which is now in brackets, has been deleted. Hence, the last sentence of paragraph 3 now reads as follows:

"It is, therefore, recommended that the Commission continue consideration of the item at its subsequent substantive session, on the basis of views and proposals made during the 1981 and 1982 sessions as well as those which may be submitted at a later stage."

Before I conclude, I should like to express my sincerest appreciation to all the delegations for their effective and very energetic participation in the exchange of views and deliberations that took place in the five meetings we had. In particular I express my personal thanks to Mr. Lin and Mr. Alem for the very supportive assistance they extended to me and other members of the Working Group.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Romania Chairman of the subgroup concerning agenda items 5 (a) and 5 (b), to introduce its report.

Mr. Diaconu (Romania) (interpretation from French): I have the honour to present the report of the subgroup concerning agenda item 5 (a) and (b).

After recalling the Working Group's task, derived from the mandate given the Commission in resolution 36/82 A of 9 December 1981, the report notes that the Group began a substantive exchange of views on the basis of the "Background paper on some of the proposed principles and ideas which should govern further actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures", and of other ideas and proposals presented during the debate.
Mr. Diaconu, Romania

The report notes too the submission by the delegation of India of a working paper, in document A/CN.10/35, also containing some proposals and ideas, as well as recommendations, which could not be taken up because of lack of time.

What the report does not mention is that during the debate many interesting suggestions and ideas were put forward which delegations have undoubtedly noted and which will be useful in future.

The exchange of views revealed several generally accepted concerns and ideas. As the report states, the exchange of views brought out first and foremost the serious concern of Member States about the continuing arms race, particularly the nuclear arms race and growing military expenditures, which constitute a heavy burden for all nations and have extremely dangerous consequences with regard to international peace and security.

Also, the report reaffirms the possibility of achieving continued and systematic reductions in military expenditures without prejudice to the right of all States to undiminished security, self-defence and sovereignty. As the report states, there was general agreement that the objective of efforts in this field should be to achieve international agreements on the reduction of military expenditures. At the same time, the report points out that divergent views were expressed on the way that goal should be pursued. Indeed, there were more divergent views at some times than at others on the questions considered during the exchange of views. These divergent views are set out in paragraphs 7 to 13 of the report. I shall not go into their substance, since they are clearly stated in those paragraphs.
The Working Group also submits two recommendations. It recommends to the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament that it request the Disarmament Commission to continue at its next substantive sessions consideration of this agenda item, including consideration of the background paper and some of the principles and ideas proposed to govern future actions of States in the field of freezing and reduction of military expenditures and other proposals and ideas on this subject, keeping in mind the possibility of identifying and embodying such principles that should govern any future action by States on freezing and reduction of military expenditures and the possibility of codifying such principles in a suitable document at an appropriate stage.

It also recommends that the Commission continue consideration of the proposals and ideas and recommendations on this subject, including those contained in document A/CN.10/35, submitted by India, to which I referred earlier.

Mr. Chairman, I should now like to inform you of some typing errors in the report that should be corrected in the final version. I undertook to do this to the Working Group last night.

The title of the report should read "Concerning agenda item 5 (a) and (b)".

In the last line of paragraph 8, the idea accepted by the Group was that in the framework of paragraph 8 we should have two subparagraphs. The first subparagraph would begin, "Some delegations referred to..." and the second paragraph would begin with the words "It was also stated that a greater openness..." on the last line on page 3.

On page 4, in the fifth line down in paragraph 8 the text should read, "that they should not constitute a precondition...". On page 5, in paragraph 11 the second line should read, "are a sufficient basis". In the same paragraph 11, the second sentence "Some delegations also underlined the need to follow..." should be the second sentence in paragraph 12. This was agreed to in the Working Group. So the second sentence in paragraph 11 should be shifted to become the second sentence in paragraph 12.

These are the corrections that I wish to make so that the report fully reflects the views of the representatives who participated.
As members of the Council have all seen, in the first paragraph the Working Group adopted the report with the recommendation that it be included in the relevant part of the report of the Commission to the second special session devoted to disarmament.

There is another point that I should like to draw to the attention of members. In the annex to the background paper, the debate showed the need to make two changes in the text. These are mistakes that slipped into the old text. Unfortunately they gave rise to quite a lot of discussion even though it was a case of errors.

In the last part of paragraph 2, the words "as well as other fundamental principles applied to disarmament" should be deleted. Nobody accepted responsibility for this part of the sentence and everybody agreed that this was not the place to have it, so those words should be deleted from paragraph 2.

In paragraph 4 (a), the words "in order to ensure" should be changed to read, "without prejudice to". The French text is correct. This correction applies to the English text.

Mr. Chairman, this is all that I wanted to say to you in introducing the report of the Working Group. I should just like to thank those delegations that participated in the work of the Group and all my colleagues who indeed contributed to the substantive work. I should like also to thank the Secretariat, Mr. Efimov and his colleagues, who helped us a great deal in our work.
The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the Bahamas, the Chairman of the subgroup concerning agenda item 6, to introduce the report of the subgroup.

Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas): First of all, I should like to make a small correction. On page 5 of the text, the second line of subparagraph (d) should read: "in the regions which constitute major areas of tension and crisis".

I had the privilege and honour of serving as the Chairman of the subgroup of Working Group II which, as representatives will recall, was asked to pursue informally item 6 of the Commission's agenda on the elaboration of the general approach to the study on all aspects of the conventional arms race and on disarmament relating to conventional weapons and armed forces, as well as its structure and scope, taking into account General Assembly resolution 36/97 A.

I am very happy to report that, entirely owing to the constructive work and positive atmosphere exhibited by all members at the five meetings of the subgroup, there was consensus agreement on the text presented today to members of the Commission entitled "Guide-lines for the study on conventional disarmament". The purpose of the text is exactly that - no more, no less. It is to provide a chart to enable the expert group to navigate the very tricky waters of this difficult subject.

In setting out the general approach, structure and scope of the study, we have attempted to indicate to the expert group some of the channels along which it should proceed and some of the shoals and hazards we suggest might be investigated. It is not my wish to go through the paper in detail, but it might be useful if I offered a few words section by section.

The first two paragraphs are straightforward and describe the tasks that the General Assembly set for the Disarmament Commission in connexion with this study.

Paragraph 3 introduces the text of the agreed guidelines contained in subsequent paragraphs.

Paragraph 4 sets out the general approach to the study and contains a series of provisions and principles for the experts to take fully into account.
The importance of the Final Document is highlighted, as the primary priority of nuclear disarmament is stressed. The place of conventional disarmament within the context of progress towards general and complete disarmament is given due significance. The group of experts is called upon to be guided in its reporting by the principle of consensus, with sufficient flexibility to allow the reflection of differing viewpoints.

Paragraph 5 sets out a series of conceptual and/or practical elements which the scope and structure of the study should contain. In effect these are a series of reference points, or, if I may return to my earlier nautical analogy, marker buoys for the experts to pass in the course of the journey of the study.

In paragraph 6 the experts are recommended to draw fully on the valuable material contained in earlier studies by the Secretary-General and also to take into account the ideas and suggestions contained in four working papers submitted to the Disarmament Commission.

Finally, in paragraph 7 the expert group is invited to make assessments, proposals and recommendations as appropriate.

These guidelines are not addressed to our superior body, the General Assembly, but, through the Secretary-General, to the expert group carrying out a specific study. It is therefore suggested that the paper should not be contained within the body of the Commission's report to the special session of the General Assembly but should be annexed to that report.

The subject under study is a vast and complex one, and it is my personal belief that we are setting the expert group a very large task. The experts will have a responsibility to use their discretion and expertise, but the guidelines, if accepted by the Commission, will, I believe, do much to assist them in their hazardous passage.

Finally, I wish to commend Mr. Boothby, Secretary of the Working Group, and other members of the secretariat for their valuable assistance and co-operation in bringing about the successful outcome of our task.
The CHAIRMAN: I believe I speak on behalf of all members of the Commission when I express our sincere gratitude to the Chairmen and to their hard-working groups for the really outstanding work they have accomplished and also for the results achieved. These certainly differ from group to group, but altogether I am sure they can be termed constructive and fruitful. I believe that the confidence that we placed in the four Chairmen has been fully justified by the results of their work.

I shall now call on the members who wish to make statements at this juncture.

Mr. SARAN (India): My delegation wishes to speak to introduce document A/CN.10/35 of 20 May 1982, on the reduction of military budgets, which contains a working paper presented on behalf of the delegation of India.

The working paper sets out the position of my delegation on the question of reduction of military budgets. It has been our consistent position that the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament already provides a good basis on which to pursue the reduction of military expenditures. For this reason we are convinced that the Disarmament Commission, instead of attempting to identify and elaborate principles which would govern the process of the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, would be able to make a more valuable contribution by identifying specific steps to be undertaken by States in this regard on the basis of principles that are already well known and established by consensus.

In addition, my delegation has proposed that the international community should work out a practical programme for the reallocation of resources now being used for military purposes to economic and social development, particularly for the benefit of developing countries.

As has been pointed out in the report of subgroup A of Working Group II concerning agenda item 5 (a) and 5 (b), the working paper presented by my delegation could not be discussed owing to lack of time. However, we hope that at the next substantive session of the Commission the ideas and proposals contained in the document will be the subject of further deliberations. In the meantime we would welcome any comments that delegations might wish to offer on the document at this session.
Mr. ROSSIDES (Cyprus): I have asked to speak in reference to what was said by the Chairman of the subgroup concerning agenda item 4.

I had submitted a document in reference to the need for progress in international security concurrently with progress on disarmament. There was some discussion on it, but, as the Chairman of the subgroup said, there was no time to discuss it exhaustively because it was taken up at the end of the subgroup's work; I introduced it as a part of the conclusion.

Therefore, I have delivered a copy of the document to the secretariat. It will be circulated together with copies of resolution 35/156 J, and will be discussed more fully in the Committee of the Whole as suggested by the Chairman of Working Group I.

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the proposal of the representative of Cyprus, the paper submitted by him will be taken up during our consideration of recommendations and conclusions in the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. BEAUSSE (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation agreed, as an exception, to participate without the provision of simultaneous interpretation in the various working groups that prepared the reports that have been introduced to us today, in English only. Now that the documents have been officially introduced in our Commission, which is having a plenary meeting for that purpose, they must be translated into the other official languages of this Organization, and that must be done before they are discussed and adopted.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution in this respect at its thirty-sixth session. It is unacceptable that a large number of Member States cannot participate fully in the work of the Commission because the working papers submitted to it were not translated into the other official languages in time.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure that the secretariat has taken due note of the comments made by the representative of France. I am told that the translations will be ready by Thursday at the latest.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.