DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 15 December 1982, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HEPBURN (Vice-Chairman)

- Organizational matters (continued)
- Election of other officers of the Disarmament Commission (continued)
- Closure of the session

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82-65064
The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: At the outset, I should like to convey the apologies of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, the representative of Poland, Ambassador Matorf, who is occupied in the Security Council.

I shall attempt to present to members of the Commission first of all a kind of paraphrase of the work we did at our last meeting, in order that, in this final meeting of the Disarmament Commission, we may come to a decision as to our course of action.

We have met in order to try to determine the organization of work for the substantive session of the Commission for 1983 and we have gone, I think, as far as we can go. We have exhausted all the possibilities of adopting an agenda at this time for the 1983 session.

We elected a Chairman and urged regional groups which had not selected their nominees for the other officers of the Commission for 1983 to do so as soon as possible, with the hope and expectation that the election of officers would be completed at this session.

We also reviewed those draft resolutions related to the work of the Commission in which the General Assembly assigned to the Commission specific tasks for its future session. We also outlined a number of ideas regarding the organization of work, in particular regarding the duration of the session, the method of work, including the question whether to have a general debate at the substantive session, and a tentative allotment of time to items of the provisional agenda.

Members of the Commission were asked to think about and to consult on the ideas that had been proposed. In the view of the Chairman, the issues were of a rather complicated nature and we raised a number of questions that are now before the Commission in a conference room paper. On the basis of the discussions that have taken place, it might be wiser to let these issues mature in the course of the consultations that will take place between now and the opening of the May session in the hope that at that time a clearer picture of the programme of work will emerge that can be put to the Commission at the very beginning of its work in 1983.

I propose that we follow that course of action rather than attempting to discuss further any of the issues in the short time available to us.
Mr. Duarte (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, my delegation entirely agrees with what you have just said. Because of circumstances which are beyond our control and which we understand perfectly, there seems to be no point in trying to clear up the issues more than we have done at our last meeting and to date.

Speaking in my capacity as a member of the delegation from which the next Chairman has been drafted by the Commission, I express the hope that in the period between now and the beginning of the substantive session there will be time for consultations so that when we start the substantive work of the Commission next May we shall lose as little time as possible on the procedural arrangements that still lie ahead of us. But I agree entirely with your assessment of the situation, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lundvik (Sweden): At our last meeting, some delegations expressed certain reservations with regard to agenda item 6. Since that agenda item concerns the report entitled "Common Security", I should like to make a few observations on this item - in accordance with resolution 37/99 B, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly on Monday, 13 December, a resolution that was introduced in the First Committee by Sweden.

In the view of the sponsors of resolution 37/99 B, there is an urgent need to have the various elements of this programme of action in the field of disarmament considered in the United Nations system. The proposals and recommendations in this report are not Utopian. Some of them may be ambitious, but they are all eminently practical and reasonable.

The purpose of the proposal to take up the "Common Security" report here in the United Nations Disarmament Commission is not to have a discussion in depth of all its possible implications. It is both more limited and more ambitious than that - more limited because we realize that the report by the Disarmament Commission will in all likelihood be of a general nature; more ambitious because it is our hope that a consensus report by the Disarmament Commission will provide the impetus for an effective follow-up of the programme of action on disarmament proposed in the "Common Security" report.
My delegation is fully prepared to discuss any problems in connection with this proposed agenda item. At this stage I should just like to point out that we have in resolution 37/99 B an official request by the General Assembly to consider the report. While the results of that consideration by the Commission cannot, for obvious reasons, be predicted, the request by the General Assembly is, of course, something that the Commission should make every effort to comply with.

Having said that, I should like to conclude by saying that my delegation has no objection to continuing the consultations on this and other agenda items at a later stage, as you suggested, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: Since there are no other comments, it is decided to follow the proposal I made earlier with respect to our work.
Members have before them conference room paper A/CN.10/1982/CRP.11, a working paper by Sweden, entitled "The Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues: Elements of a programme for arms limitation and disarmament". There they will find an outline of the elements of a programme that might make it a little easier for many of them who might not have had a chance to read "Common Security", which was sent to us earlier in the year.

While I am talking about documents I should like to draw the attention of members to paragraph 4 (b) of document A/CN.10/1982/CRP.10 in which General Assembly resolutions 34/83 F, 35/142 A, 36/82 A and 37/78 H are mentioned. I would ask them to delete "37/78 H" and replace it with "37/95 A". I am sure that this will enhance study of the documents as members continue their arduous work in trying to reach some kind of agreement on the reduction of military budgets.

Does any representative wish to make any other comments?

Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria): My delegation would like to recall that at the very first meeting of the Disarmament Commission this year we raised the matter of the present formulation of agenda item 5, and the impression my delegation got at that time was that delegations were yet to consult with a view to obtaining appropriate instructions as to how they wanted this item to be formulated.

My delegation would like to know if there have been any developments from the position at our last meeting.

The CHAIRMAN: As Chairman I do not have any information. If I remember correctly, the question was raised by the representatives of the United States and France. I am not sure whether any decisions have been reached.

Mr. de la SAPLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): On this point we have a few suggestions to make. We are ready to discuss and to hold consultations on them with the delegation of Nigeria. Taking into account the agenda for today's meeting, I do not know whether we should do it today, because, Mr. Chairman, you may wish to resolve this question during the consultations to be undertaken on the other points.
The CHAIRMAN: I had been under the assumption that since we were going
to postpone any decision on the agenda as a whole and consultations would continue,
the question raised by the representative of Nigeria was included in that
postponement. Moreover, I had no further instructions from any Member State
with regard to the actual wording of the title, so I thought it might be
considered during further consultations. I hope this meets with the
satisfaction of the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. AYEMAH (Nigeria): Yes, it does, Mr. Chairman.

ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform delegations that two regional
groups have selected their nominees as candidates for officers of the Commission -
namely, Czechoslovakia and Romania from the Eastern European Group, and the
Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden from the Group of Western European and
Other Countries.

In the absence of information relating to candidates from other regions, I
propose that we conduct a partial election on the basis of the known candidates that
I have just named. My reason for proposing this is that if consultations are to
continue it would be very helpful to the Chairman to have some other officers of
the Commission to work with.

If that is agreeable to the Commission, we shall proceed to the election.

I put to the Commission the candidacies of Czechoslovakia and Romania from
the Eastern European Group and of the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden from
the Group of Western European and Other Countries, to be elected in the usual
manner as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission. Since these candidates are the choice
of their respective regional groups, I shall take it, if there is no objection,
that the Commission elects them as officers of the 1983 Bureau.

It was so decided.
The CHAIRMAN: The election of the other officers of the Commission - namely, two vice-chairmen from the African Group, one vice-chairman from the Latin American Group, and a rapporteur from the Asian Group - will have to be postponed until later, in the hope that those regional groups will select their candidates as soon as possible and communicate their selections to the new Chairman or to the Secretary of the Commission.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I now propose that we close this session of the Disarmament Commission. As usual I should first of all like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the members of the Secretariat, including the Secretary, the members of the Centre for Disarmament and of the Documents Section, the interpreters and all those persons who have helped our work to progress as far as it has. I hope that by the time we begin our next session we will have a better understanding of what our agenda will be like. We are certainly looking forward to a much more meaningful Disarmament Commission and I think we have started in the right way. At least we have some items on the agenda which emanate from resolutions adopted at this session, and we look forward to having some kind of agreement or compromise on this issue. We shall not know this until we begin our work, and we hope that the other officers of the Commission will be elected as soon as possible. This would enable the Chairman to carry out his work more effectively.

With my sincerest wishes and, I am sure, those of the Chairman of the Commission, the Ambassador of Poland, for a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year, I declare this session of the Commission closed.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.