AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

Ninth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 8 May 1978, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran)

CONTENTS

Other matters

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78-56106
The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

OTHER MATTERS

1. The CHAIRMAN invited members to consider the Committee's draft special report to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (A/AC.167/L.13) and informed them that he had ascertained through extensive consultations that the nuclear-weapon States agreed to the wording as it stood. He called upon the Rapporteur, as Chairman of the Working Group which had prepared the draft report, to introduce it.

2. Mr. LOPEZ-CHICHERI (Spain), Rapporteur, said that in preparing the draft report, the Working Group had been guided by General Assembly resolution 32/89 and had tried to give a clear over-all picture of the Committee's work since the idea of convening a special session had first taken root. The annex in volume II was necessary in order to reflect all of the views voiced in the Committee. Paragraphs 16, 17 and 19 of the introduction were incomplete pending determination of the number of meetings held. He observed that paragraphs 95 and 96 in section V reflected a spirit of compromise resulting from extensive negotiations.

3. The CHAIRMAN suggested, since the text had proved acceptable to everyone, that the Committee should approve the draft report as a whole.

4. Mr. FOKINE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Committee's special report should serve not only to ensure that the question of a World Disarmament Conference was thoroughly discussed at the special session but also to promote the preparations for convening such a conference. His delegation welcomed the fact that the draft report included the positions of all States on the idea of convening such a conference and showed that the idea had broad support in spite of divergent approaches to particular aspects of the question. The report would enable the special session to draw the appropriate conclusions with respect to the convening of a conference, although it would have been even better if the draft report had also provided specific recommendations with respect to setting the date and establishing a preparatory body for the conference.

5. Calling a halt to the arms race was one of the most burning questions of the day. Speaking in Moscow on 25 April 1978, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, had declared that peoples and Governments everywhere wanted an immediate end to the military danger posed by the growing arms race and that the Soviet Union would do its utmost to ensure the success of a World Disarmament Conference, a matter which he had also discussed on his recent visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. In a recent communiqué, the Warsaw Pact States had also indicated that they favoured such a conference with the participation of all States and that they would do everything possible to ensure its success.

6. A World Disarmament Conference was the best way to ensure implementation of the decisions which would be taken by the special session, and it should be so organized that specific problems would be dealt with primarily by the States most
directly concerned. The delegates should be properly authorized to produce the relevant documents, and the option to call in qualified experts should be available. The Soviet Union had always regarded such a conference as the forum that could bring a change from issuing appeals to taking practical steps towards agreement on specific disarmament measures. It had itself put forward many proposals to curb the arms race. For example, Mr. Brezhnev had proposed stopping the increase in armaments as a first step towards reducing them. Specifically, he had called for a halt to the production of all types of nuclear weapons; a halt to the production, and the prohibition, of all other types of weapons of mass destruction; a halt to the creation of new types of highly destructive conventional weapons; and a renunciation of the expansion of armies and of the increase of conventional weapons by the permanent members of the Security Council and by the countries bound to them by military agreements.

7. The Soviet Union was motivated by a desire to halt the arms race and to bring about general and complete disarmament because the arms race posed an unprecedented danger to all mankind. The world was now witnessing the development of new weapons systems which threatened to expand the arms race beyond all political regulation, thus creating an increased danger of nuclear war. Under such circumstances, an agreement on disarmament could only become more difficult later on. He hoped that the report would provide a basis for discussing the convening of a World Disarmament Conference and would facilitate its preparation.

8. Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom) asked what were the financial implications of reproducing the bulky material contained in the annex, which had already been published in other United Nations documents.

9. Mr. RWAMBUYA (Budget Division) said that the translation costs amounted to $2,900 for Arabic, $2,200 for Chinese, $11,400 for English, $5,700 for French, $3,300 for Russian and $3,300 for Spanish and that the distribution costs amounted to $300, making a total of $29,100. It was not yet known whether those costs could be covered from available sources.

10. Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom) asked whether the Working Group had been aware of those financial implications when it had agreed to the format of the document.

11. Mr. LOPEZ-CHICHERI (Spain), Rapporteur and Chairman of the Working Group, said that the Working Group had been unaware of the data but had agreed on the format because most of the delegates had thought it necessary to present an overall picture of the views which had been put forward at various times with respect to the World Disarmament Conference. Some representatives had even preferred to include those views in the substantive part of the report; thus, the result was in the nature of a compromise, which had been deemed necessary in order to obtain a consensus.

12. Mr. FULLER (United Kingdom) said that he would not stand in the way of an agreement reached by the majority but had some reservations regarding the amount being spent to reproduce views which were already available.
13. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided to adopt the report contained in document A/AC.167/L.13.

14. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.