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UNITED NATIONS
CENTRE FOR DISARMAMENT
DEPARTMENT OF
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Distr.
GENERAL
A/AC.181/SR.11
18 June 1976

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 16 June 1976, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/AC.181/3) (continued)

REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS ROLE IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, INCLUDING INTER ALIA THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC ITEMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 3484 B (XXX)

POSSIBLE NEW APPROACHES FOR ACHIEVING MORE EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

WAYS AND MEANS OF IMPROVING EXISTING UNITED NATIONS FACILITIES FOR COLLECTION, COMPILATION AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

WAYS AND MEANS TO ENABLE THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT TO ASSIST, ON REQUEST, STATES PARTIES TO MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS IN THEIR DUTY TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF SUCH AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING APPROPRIATE PERIODICAL REVIEWS (A/AC.181/1 and Add.1-5; A/AC.181/L.1-5) (continued)

1. Mr. LAY (Italy) said that it must be admitted that, six years after the proclamation of the Disarmament Decade, the United Nations and its Member States had not yet made substantial progress in the problem of halting the arms race and reducing the appalling annual world expenditures on armaments. The world community must nevertheless press on in its work towards general and complete disarmament and resist frustration.
2. His Government had always approached, with an open mind and in a positive spirit, all proposals, including the Swedish initiative to review the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and other proposals that might give the work on disarmament fresh impetus and produce new ideas, in particular the proposal to convene a world disarmament conference. The conference could, if organized so as to ensure the presence of all factors essential for success, play a catalytic role in encouraging negotiations on disarmament measures in the appropriate forums.
3. Within the general framework of the problems before the Ad Hoc Committee, namely, the perfection of machinery for dealing with disarmament, priority should be given to the question of improving the First Committee's methods of work on disarmament matters; its proceedings must be made more orderly, efficient and simple. He noted, however, that the lack of effectiveness or failure in the functioning of the United Nations might well be due to the conduct and practices of delegations themselves rather than to the structure of the Organization and its organs or to its rules and procedures. It would seem advisable not to overemphasize the importance of organizational change. The political will of States to make substantive progress was more important than efforts to find new machinery.
4. Mr. TULINOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union had continuously favoured expanding the role of the United Nations in solving problems connected with the arms race and disarmament. The United Nations should act to secure the speedy implementation of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Of special importance in that connexion was the convening of a

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(Mr. Tulinov, USSR)

world disarmament conference, supported by the overwhelming majority of Member States. Resolution 3484 B (XXX) reflected the dissatisfaction and concern of many Governments with the lack of progress achieved in disarmament, which, in the view of his delegation, was not due to the machinery or the negotiation procedures but rather to the negative attitude of certain States, permanent members of the Security Council, towards taking real steps to achieve disarmament. Efforts to focus attention on procedural and organizational matters only distracted the attention of Governments from the substance of disarmament issues and could be used by opponents of disarmament in order to postpone the establishment of effective and practical negotiations on the subject.

5. He was not in principle opposed to considering the question of strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, but insisted that discussion of the question must not be allowed to disrupt or destroy established and tested disarmament negotiation machinery, in particular, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. The Conference was an autonomous body and all questions relating to its organization and procedures were exclusively within its competence.

6. With regard to the study of disarmament questions in the General Assembly, in particular, in the First Committee, he felt that the Ad Hoc Committee might well be able to offer constructive recommendations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of and rationalizing the work of those bodies. Efforts to that end should not, however, impair the interests and rights of Member States with regard to their participation in the consideration of disarmament questions and the preparation of draft resolutions and initiatives on the subject, but might rather seek more effectively to organize the study of disarmament questions, through the informal circulation of draft resolutions at the beginning of discussions and the simultaneous consideration of related problems.

7. He noted that proposals had been submitted urging the United Nations to extend its services and technical co-operation to multilateral and regional disarmament negotiations. It was important, in his view, that such links be established only at the request of the bodies concerned, which must themselves determine the form and nature of United Nations co-operation desired.

8. While acknowledging that some of the studies on the subject of disarmament carried out in the United Nations had been of great value, he insisted that such studies must be undertaken only with the assistance of government experts. He did not favour the establishment of specialized machinery to carry out such investigations on a permanent basis. Similarly, United Nations information activities on the subject of disarmament could be expanded, but must always be based on data and materials submitted by Member States. The United Nations should not distribute information received from private research institutions.

9. With regard to ways and means to enable the United Nations Secretariat to assist, on request, States parties to multilateral disarmament agreements in their duty to ensure the effective functioning of such agreements, he stated that the

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assumption by the Secretariat of any control or inspection functions with regard to disarmament agreements in force was unacceptable, since the agreements had not provided for such a role for the Secretariat and had their own system of control.

10. His delegation could not accept the proposal to remove the Disarmament Affairs Division from the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs of the Secretariat and establish a separate body. Disarmament questions were one of the chief and most legitimate areas of activity of the Department and it continued to deal with them successfully. Disarmament questions should be studied in their political context. In addition, to place such questions under the direct control of the Secretary-General would be to burden further the already overtaxed Secretary-General. A better approach would be to consider strengthening the Disarmament Affairs Division, including increasing its staff somewhat.

11. His delegation had not opposed taking the Swedish working paper (A/AC.181/L.5) as the basis for further discussions in the Ad Hoc Committee, but that did not mean that his delegation agreed with all of the proposals contained in the document.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.