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

Second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 18 June 1976, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. THORSSON (Sweden)

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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 (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/AC.181/2 and 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. MANSFIELD (New Zealand) said that it was important for the Ad Hoc Committee to produce concrete recommendations which would help make the work of the United Nations on disarmament matters more effective. His delegation shared the widespread feeling of frustration at the fact that, although the Security Council had a mandate under Article 26 of the Charter to promote disarmament and although the General Assembly annually conducted deliberations on disarmament proposals, the contribution of the United Nations since its establishment to the goals of complete or even partial disarmament had been far from satisfactory.

2. The lack of real progress stemmed more from an absence of the essential political will than from inadequacies in the United Nations machinery for dealing with disarmament problems. Nevertheless, in the belief that every avenue of improvement must be explored, his delegation had been pleased to support the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee, whose task assumed greater significance when it was recalled that the United Nations had largely been bypassed in the limited developments which had thus far been achieved in the disarmament field.

3. The focus of the annual discussions in the First Committee and the General Assembly - which were the only forums in which all Member countries, particularly the smaller nations, could participate in matters which vitally affected their future - must be rendered more precise and clear in order to reveal areas where real progress on disarmament was possible. The underlying objective must always be to try to facilitate agreement on issues on which there was a wide divergence of opinion and interest among Member States. In certain instances, the procedure suggested by the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System, to the effect that small negotiating groups should be established which would work under a full-time chairman for specified periods during which interested parties would seek to reconcile their differences, could enhance the prospects of the speedier implementation of resolutions in the disarmament field. Whether or not that proposal proved acceptable, there was a need for systematic consultations among interested delegations on draft resolutions on the main disarmament items before they were formally debated.

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(Mr. Mansfield, New Zealand)

4. His delegation welcomed the review which the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) was conducting of its own procedures. It was to be hoped that ways and means would be found to induce all the nuclear Powers to participate in its work, for the absence of two of those Powers, coupled with the limited mandate of CCD, had seriously circumscribed the role which that body had been able to play. Consideration should also be given to rotating the membership of CCD in order to help infuse new direction and initiative into its deliberations. Interested non-Member States might also be enabled to attend meetings of the Conference as observers.

5. His Government supported the convening of a world disarmament conference and a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament matters provided the nuclear Powers were prepared to participate.

6. His delegation agreed in general with a number of other aims underlying the recommendations in the working paper contained in document A/AC.181/L.5, particularly those relating to the dissemination of information on disarmament questions, the preparation by the Secretariat of an annual report on aspects of disarmament issues and the examination of increased and effective participation by the United Nations Secretariat in ensuring the effective functioning of disarmament agreements. He hoped that the examination of the suggestions made in the replies of Governments would lead to a useful set of recommendations for inclusion in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly.

7. Mr. THEODORACOPOULOS (Greece) said that if efforts to bring about disarmament were to be more effective, they must be pursued along with efforts aiming at consolidating international security. Accordingly, the question of strengthening the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament was closely related to the problem of strengthening its role in the field of international security. In practical terms, the strict implementation of resolutions on international security would facilitate a reduction of tensions and thus consolidate security. Accordingly, it was possible to take effective measures to control disarmament. The United Nations was an irreplaceable forum for the discussion of universal levels regarding arms control and the gradual reduction of armaments.

8. Consideration must be given to changing the methods of work of various organs concerned with disarmament, in particular, those of the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. The former should consider reducing the number of items on its agenda to permit a more analytical and extensive examination of disarmament problems. With regard to CCD, his delegation believed that the participation of all nuclear Powers in its work would render it more effective. CCD should consider how the United Nations could provide assistance, on request, in connexion with regional disarmament or arms control agreements. CCD should also discuss how the United Nations, as an impartial third party, might be entrusted with the responsibility of supervising the implementation of such agreements.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

