VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 April 1960, at 3 p.m.

Chairman

Mr. NOSEK (Czechoslovakia)
PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Bulgaria:
Mr. M. TARABANOV
Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Col. K. SAVOV

Canada:
Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL
W/Cdr. R.J. MITCHELL

Czechoslovakia:
Mr. J. NOSEK
Lieut.-Gen. J. HRŠKO
Mr. Z. TRHLIK

France:
Mr. J. MOCH
Mr. M. LEGENDRE
Col. L. CONVERT

Italy:
Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. L. DAINELLI
Mr. D. PHILIPSON

Poland:
Mr. M. NASKOWSKI
Mr. M. LACHS
Brig.-Gen. J. SLIWINSKI

Romania:
Mr. E. MEZINCESCU
Mr. C. BOGDAN
Col. C. POPA

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:
Mr. V.A. ZORIN
Col.-Gen. A.A. GRYZLOV
Mr. A.A. ROSSHCHIN
PRESENT AT THE TABLE (contd.)

United Kingdom:
Rt. Hon. D. ORMSBY-GORE
Miss B. SALT
Maj.-Gen. RIDDILL

United States of America:
Mr. F.M. EATON
Mr. C.C. STELLE
Rear-Admiral P.L. DUDLEY

Representative of the Secretary-General:
Mr. W. EPSTEIN
The CHAIRMAN (Czechoslovakia): I declare open the twenty-fourth meeting of the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament. Does any member of the Committee wish to speak? I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. BURNS (Canada): I was a little doubtful whether I would speak today and I was waiting to see whether anybody had anything more important to say, but as at the moment there seems to be some reluctance to speak I have concluded that perhaps I should talk about the matter which I have had in preparation. If this serves no other purpose it will give other representatives an opportunity to shake themselves down after the Easter holiday and to get back into the spirit of our discussions.

During our discussions to date a considerable amount of time has been devoted to the question of nuclear disarmament, and representatives of several delegations have spoken about the direct method of approaching this question -- that is, by attempting to bring a halt to the production of fissionable materials for weapon purposes and by the transfer of such materials to peaceful uses. Mr. Eaton spoke of our proposals in that connexion last time we met. In addition, there has been some discussion of the indirect method of approaching the problem -- that is, by dealing with the means of delivery of nuclear weapons. It is on this latter question that I want to speak today and in particular on the question of the potentially most advanced means of delivery of these nuclear weapons -- namely, space vehicles which may become a means of delivery. The Italian delegation has recently spoken on this subject also.

I wish to draw the attention of the Committee again to this problem and to the provisions set forth in the Western plan which are intended to meet it, in part because I judge from previous statements by the representatives of certain Eastern delegations that the point at issue, as we see it, is still far from clear. However, there are more pressing motives for returning to this question. In the first place, as the representative of France put it at our first meeting, the peoples of the world expect us to concentrate the very greatest possible effort towards reaching agreement on nuclear disarmament, and if we were not to do so our deliberations here would "dash their hopes and bitterly disappoint them."

(TNCD/PV.1, page 17) These words, I think, put the matter very plainly and very accurately. We would indeed bitterly disappoint the hopes of the peoples of our own countries and of the many more States which are not represented here if
we were not at all times to keep the question of nuclear disarmament well to the forefront in our minds. It is for just this reason that the Western plan contains practical provisions for the immediate study of measures to ensure controlled nuclear disarmament by both the "direct" and "indirect" methods, and for their implementation as soon as these studies have been successfully completed. This was one of the main reasons why we were disappointed with the original Soviet plan, which referred to nuclear disarmament only in rather vague terms that gave us no idea of how concrete measures might be implemented.

I shall refer later to the suggestion which has been made more recently with regard to the renunciation of the first use of nuclear arms.

I also wish to make some observations on the comment which the Eastern delegations have offered on a number of occasions, to the effect that the question of space vehicles cannot be dealt with while the problem of foreign bases remains an issue between us. The representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, put the answer to this line of argument very well at our meeting of 29 March (TNCD/PV.11) when he observed that our proposals on the subject of space vehicles are intended to anticipate and to remove difficulties which may arise in the future if the unimpeded development of new and potentially more efficient means of delivery of nuclear weapons is permitted. Because of new scientific developments, the problems presented on the one hand by bases for aircraft or conventional forces and, on the other, by space vehicles, are problems which are different in kind and require to be dealt with by different methods.

If I understand it correctly, the speech of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR to the Supreme Soviet, to which Mr. Ormsby-Gore and Mr. Zorin referred at our seventeenth meeting, may itself be said to lend some support to this point of view. In that speech, Mr. Khrushchev stated that:

"the present level of military technique being what it is, the air force and navy have lost their former importance. These arms are being replaced by rockets. We have now drastically reduced and apparently will reduce still further or even discontinue production of bombers and other obsolete craft."

I have taken the above quotation from the English language translation of Mr. Khrushchev's speech which was prepared by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.
But this is not the essential point, as the question whether the bases themselves form a serious problem is not the main question at issue in this context. The proposition which I take it the Eastern delegations have not yet fully appreciated — although we have tried to make it clear on a number of occasions — is that space vehicles armed with weapons of mass destruction present a totally new problem and one which must be dealt with rapidly while we have the chance. Furthermore, it is in this area and in the area of missile development in general that the arms race which we all deplore is at its most extreme, and it is therefore here that we should concentrate a considerable measure of our efforts to investigate what can be done to achieve sufficient progress to bring about a real measure of confidence among us. The consequences of our having missed a similar chance where nuclear weapons themselves were concerned, when we failed to deal with that question more than a decade ago should, I think, be sufficient warning of what may well happen in this new and rapidly developing field if we do not take speedy action.

Granted that we must make some progress in this area without delay, the question remains what exactly should be done. In the view of the Canadian delegation, a simple declaratory ban on the use of space vehicles and long-range rockets to deliver nuclear weapons would be obviously unsatisfactory for much the same reasons as we believe it to be unsatisfactory where the ban is proposed for nuclear weapons generally. A simple ban would carry no assurance with it at all; it would inspire no confidence whatever, either among the States possessing these devices or among the many more States which do not. A declaration of good intent — however admirable it may sound — must be accompanied by sufficient information to verify its effectiveness. By sufficient information to give confidence in any declaratory ban, I mean that we should have to have full details of launching sites, places of manufacture, location of stockpiles and many other matters, as well as a full opportunity to verify the accuracy of this information. Without the progressive development of exchanges of information on these matters, and without an eventual controlled and verified destruction of these weapons, leaving only the controlled use of space vehicles for peaceful and scientific purposes, any declaratory ban on their use would be worse than meaningless.
However, we must consider seriously whether there is a real possibility of such an extensive exchange of information at the present time. Is there sufficient confidence among the States involved for all of them to join wholeheartedly in implementing the measures which would be necessary in a programme of this kind? If the answer to this question is not "yes", then we must ask ourselves what less ambitious steps we might take which would at the same time constitute a useful beginning.

It was to make the best beginning which appeared feasible in this sphere of disarmament that the Western plan submitted on 15 March put forward certain proposals with respect to missiles and space vehicles. I would hope that we would all be familiar by now with the relevant proposals of the Western plan, but in view of the questions put by members of certain Eastern delegations, I believe that they are worth repeating. The portions of the plan cited below are taken from document TNCD/3 of 16 March.

Point B of stage I of the plan calls for "prior notification to the international disarmament organization of proposed launchings of space vehicles and the establishment of co-operative arrangements for communicating to the international disarmament organization data obtained from available tracking facilities". Points 1 and 2 of section F of stage I of the plan call, respectively, for studies to be undertaken concerning "measures to ensure compliance with an agreement that no nation shall place into orbit or station in outer space weapons of mass destruction including provision for on-site inspection" and "measures to ensure compliance with an agreement on prior notification of missile launchings, according to predetermined and mutually agreed criteria, and on declarations to the international disarmament organization of locations of launching sites, and places of manufacture, of such missiles." Points A and B in stage II provide that measures to implement the two proposals just mentioned would be put into effect as soon as the relevant studies had been successfully completed.

We believe that the above measures constitute a reasonable programme, staged in such a manner as to build confidence while ensuring the maximum amount of progress in this area in the shortest possible time. If implemented, they will mean — as Mr. Moch put it in his statement at our fourteenth meeting:

"... the satellites problem is entirely settled before the end of the second stage; it will be forbidden to put any into orbit unless they are strictly peaceful, and a system of control will have been set up by which the
exclusively scientific use of satellites put into orbit can be verified. Thus the first indisputable point established is that outer space will be kept out of the arms race. No twentieth-century sword of Damocles will be hanging over our heads. A disarmament measure will in this case, for the first time, have been taken before passing the point of no return ...

Thus, at the end of the second stage ... the satellites would be totally eliminated from national arsenals. Experimental launchings of missiles and all launching sites would be controlled; other weapons would be limited in proportion to the remaining forces. The control progressively established over the vehicles, which would themselves be gradually eliminated, combined with the controlled conversion of stocks of fissionable material ..." (TNCD/PV.14, pages 11 and 12)

Now the Western delegations would, I think, be pleased to hear of any suggestions for the adaptation or modification of these proposals of theirs, and we have heard, as Mr. Zorin has said, that the provisions for dealing with -- that is, abolishing -- nuclear armaments, which are contained in the third stage of the Soviet plan as originally presented, could be moved to an earlier stage. So far, however, nothing specific has been put forward by the Soviet or Eastern European delegations except a proposal that all nations possessing nuclear armaments should make a declaration that they will not be the first to use them in warfare. No proposals for verification, control or reduction in number of these nuclear weapons accompany this suggestion. Yet this suggestion is called by some Eastern delegations "a concrete measure". How there can be anything concrete about words or promises, I do not know. Concrete measures of disarmament, to my understanding, would involve men actually doing some things in relation to armaments: dismantling them, or taking them from war readiness positions and storing them under the control of international inspectors; demobilizing soldiers, sailors and airmen, and letting them go to work in industry or agriculture; or at least exchanging information about armaments and their location and testing which might otherwise cause alarm.

All the nuclear Powers, in common with all other members of the United Nations, in subscribing to the terms of the Charter -- in particular, to Article 2, paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 -- have committed themselves never to begin a war. If a nation keeps its word never to start a war, obviously it can never be the first to use a nuclear arm -- unless some other nation breaks its commitment under the Charter and commits
an aggression. So the case of use of nuclear arms cannot arise without some nation first committing an aggression. Of course, no nation here would condone any aggression, even if it were carried out only with conventional arms.

So where is the point in superimposing another declaration of good intent on the many others already made, adding a declaration unsupported by any concrete measure, verification, or mutual exchange of information for reassurance? We can see no value in such a proposal.

But this is not to say that the Canadian delegation would not consider that a declaration of intent never to be the first to use the nuclear weapon might not be of some advantage at a later stage in disarmament, when some progress has been made in conventional disarmament and, above all, when concrete measures relating to reduction in the number of nuclear weapons and their carriers, their location, the exchange of information for mutual reassurance and verification by international inspection had been put into effect. But without such measures, pledges not to use the weapons in certain circumstances will be without real meaning and will not advance the cause of effective disarmament.

Mr. IONESCU (Romania) (translation from French): Five weeks of discussion have revealed the differences of opinion between the representatives of the Western countries and the representatives of the Socialist countries regarding the objective which we all believe we have accepted as the goal of our work, and regarding the part to be played by the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament in attaining that objective.

The statements made by the representatives of the Western Powers, the plan submitted to the Committee by the five Powers, and the proposals made since the beginning of our work, prove that the Western Powers regard general and complete disarmament, not as a practical and concrete task which should be the subject of an agreement within the framework of our Committee, but as a distant ideal to which mankind should continue to aspire without knowing when or how it can be attained.

The socialist countries, on the contrary, consider that general and complete disarmament, as shown by the very terms of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV), is the most important problem facing the world today, and that the constructive solution of that problem is the immediate task of our Committee, which should arrive at an agreement on the subject in the shortest possible time.
Ever since we began our work, however, the Western Powers have rejected the idea of concluding a treaty on general and complete disarmament. They have stated that the plan for general and complete disarmament put forward by the Soviet Union cannot be accepted by the Western Powers, because its essential aim is to abolish all national military establishments without providing for their replacement by an international military organization, and to do that, they claim, would be contrary to the United Nations Charter.

They have proposed, as an alternative, that we discuss a body of disparate arms control measures, comprising three stages, the implementation of which could not, of course, lead to the accepted objective, namely, general and complete disarmament.

The Western delegations subsequently proposed that the third stage of their own plan should be practically abandoned, and that only the measures in the first two stages should be considered.

From what the United States representative told the Committee at the nineteenth meeting (TNCD/PV.19), it appeared, at the end of the fourth week of our work, that the Western delegations were no longer prepared to discuss anything but the measures provided for in the first two paragraphs of the first stage of the Western plan.

At the end of the fifth week (TNCD/PV.23), the United States representative invited the Committee to choose, from among nine points, a subject of discussion for future meetings.

It seems obvious, however, from the very nature of the subjects offered for choice, that the Western delegations are proposing that we discuss anything rather than general and complete disarmament; and that cannot bring us closer to our objective.

The Western delegations are attempting to base their position on the third operative paragraph of United Nations General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV). The essence of the interpretation the Western Powers wish to give to that paragraph is that, once it has met, the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament should abandon the idea of drafting a treaty on general and complete disarmament and discuss partial and isolated measures relating to arms control.
To accept the idea that such measures could bring us closer to the objective of our negotiations would be tantamount to accepting the idea that States -- the nuclear Powers in the first place -- could be brought to general and complete disarmament without wanting it, or at least without noticing it, which seems to me peculiarly absurd.

The only reasonable way to arrive at general and complete disarmament -- since this should be accepted as an obligation and carried out as such by sovereign States -- is to conclude a treaty on general and complete disarmament. The Head of the Foreign Office, when introducing the British plan for "comprehensive disarmament", also seemed to consider that that was the reasonable way. For on that occasion, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd said:

"Just as the nuclear tests Conference has been slowly working out a draft treaty for dealing with a cessation of nuclear tests and has reached agreement on many of those articles, so I think we should seek to work out a draft treaty embodying the proposals which I have outlined." (A/PV.798, paragraph 60)

With a view to facilitating future agreement by the conference on a treaty on general and complete disarmament, the socialist countries proposed that agreement should first be reached on the basic principles of such a treaty, and submitted document TNCD/4.

But the representatives of the Western countries opposed discussion of the basic principles of a treaty on general and complete disarmament. They tried to justify their position by describing the discussion of the basic principles of a treaty of general and complete disarmament as abstract, and to counter it with a request for discussion of no matter what arms control measure.

At our last meeting, for instance, Mr. Eaton expressed the hope "that we might pass beyond generalities and move into the real purpose of this Conference" which he stated to be "the drafting of an agreement on specific measures of disarmament and on effective means of verification of such measures". (TNCD/PV.23, page 25)

It thus appears that according to the United States representative our Conference has at least two objectives: one, declaratory, defined in General Assembly resolution 1372 (XIV), which is, as we know, to find a constructive solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament; the other, "real", which would be the drafting of an agreement -- I quote Mr. Eaton's own words --
"On specific measures of disarmament and on effective means of verification of such measures."

At one point, our Western colleagues attempted to interpret the third operative paragraph of resolution 1378 (XIV) as meaning that any partial and isolated measure in any way relating to the problem of armaments could lead "towards the goal of general and complete disarmament" as defined in the General Assembly resolution.

General and complete disarmament is now relegated to the status of a declaratory objective, while the Committee is asked to accept a "real" objective for our work, which is supposed to be something other than general and complete disarmament.

In the light of what Mr. Eaton said at the last meeting, we can more easily understand the significance of his remarks a few days before:

"It is perfectly futile for us to agree on some desirable objective unless we first determine whether all of us can come to an agreement on some of those simpler matters ..." (TNCD/FV.16, page 7)

If that means that it would be useful to discuss the basic principles of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, because agreement on the basic principles of such a treaty would be easier to reach in the Committee, we could most certainly accept the idea expressed by Mr. Eaton at the sixteenth meeting. But if abandoning the attempt to reach agreement on a desirable objective in order to try to reach general agreement on simpler matters means abandoning the idea of making some progress in the accomplishment of our Committee's basic task, namely, the preparation and conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament, and resting content with a few isolated and partial measures which can do nothing to lead us towards the objective assigned to us -- then we can certainly not accept that idea.

Thus it appears that at the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, the idea of general and complete disarmament had been recognized by all Governments of States Members of the United Nations as an urgent necessity.

In proclaiming that the question of general and complete disarmament was "the most important one facing the world today" and in calling upon governments "to make every effort to achieve a constructive solution of this problem", the Members of the United Nations unanimously recognized, for the first time in the long and complicated history of disarmament negotiations, that general and complete disarmament was an urgent practical task which should be carried out within the shortest possible time.
By referring to the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament, the records of the discussions that took place and the proposals that were made on the subject, the General Assembly -- including all the Governments represented on our Committee -- recognized the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament as the body which should draft the agreement on general and complete disarmament, to which all countries of the world could subsequently accede.

It now seems that general and complete disarmament is no longer of immediate importance, if we are to believe the statements of the Western delegations. In the view of certain governments which accepted it some months ago as the real and immediate objective of our Committee's negotiations, it is no longer so imperative.

Has the arms race become less dangerous since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1378 (XIV)?

Is the need to eliminate war from the international life of the nations no longer making itself felt?

No one can make such an assertion.

In our opinion, the arms race is still going on; military expenditure is increasing; the quantities of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them to any target are also increasing.

A very significant indication of the present pace of the arms race and aggressive preparations is, for example, the fact that the recent conference of defence ministers of the NATO countries envisaged the possibility of reducing the level of supplies required in case of war to one-third, i.e., from ninety to thirty days.

The concept of the blitzkrieg has been replaced by the concept of a super-blitz. But at the same time, the idea that general and complete disarmament is the surest way to eliminate war from the lives of the nations is spreading to the widest strata of all the peoples of the world.

Here, for example, is what President Eisenhower himself said before the Indian Parliament on 10 December 1959 -- after the adoption of resolution 1378 (XIV) of the United Nations General Assembly:

"Controlled universal disarmament is the imperative of our time. The demand for it by the hundreds of millions whose chief concern is the long future of themselves and their children will, I hope, become so universal and insistent that no man, no government can withstand it."
One may also recall certain passages from the Italian-Soviet communique issued after President Gronchi's visit to Moscow:

"The two parties expressed their firm conviction that the surest means of maintaining and consolidating peace is general and complete disarmament under adequate international control ..."

Sarcely a fortnight has gone by since Mr. Khrushchev and General de Gaulle, at the end of their talks, expressed the hope that

"the discussions now in progress at Genova between the ten Powers will serve to bring out certain points of agreement on the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control".

All these statements prove that general and complete disarmament is still a live issue and that our Committee still has the task of working out a constructive solution of the problem.

If, in spite of this, the representatives of the Western countries consider that general and complete disarmament is of less immediate importance since the adoption of resolution 1378 (XIV) by the General Assembly, they should state their opinion openly.

The representatives of the Western countries have stated before the Committee that their Governments still recognize the validity of the General Assembly resolution as a guide to negotiations in the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament and to their policy on disarmament.

But if this is really the case, then they should recognize that the real objective of our Conference must be jointly to seek and find a constructive solution of the problem of general and complete disarmament. As stated in the preamble to the document we submitted to the Committee on 8 April, we consider that the urgent practical task of the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament is "the implementation of general and complete disarmament of all States" on the basis of principles which we enunciate, which we propose as a basis for discussion and on which we hope it will be possible to reach a suitable agreement -- principles "in conformity with which a treaty on general and complete disarmament should be worked out". (TNCD/4)

If the Western Powers consider that this is not the urgent practical task of our Committee, it would be most useful if they would tell us what, in their opinion, is the body and the framework in which negotiations on general and complete disarmament should take place.
Existing differences on the final objective, the scope of the disarmament measures to be taken in accordance with a definite programme, by stages and with specific time-limits, and on how to provide for the preservation of peace and of international law and order in a disarmed world, can only be removed by means of patient negotiations.

It is, precisely, the discussion of basic principles which could help us to bring our positions closer together and thus facilitate the future drafting of a treaty on general and complete disarmament.

This shows how great is the practical importance of discussions on the basic principles of a treaty on general and complete disarmament. As you are well aware, however, we do not rule out the immediate adoption of measures calculated to reduce the risk of war and relax international tension, without waiting for the results of our discussions on the basic principles of general and complete disarmament. At the same time as we proposed the basic principles for a treaty on general and complete disarmament, we proposed that the nuclear Powers should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

I should like to comment briefly on what the representative of Canada said just now on this subject. Speaking of the proposal we have made that the nuclear Powers should solemnly undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, the representative of Canada said:

"No proposals for verification, control, or reduction in number of these nuclear weapons accompany this suggestion." (Page 68 above)

But as I have had already had occasion to point out to the Committee, if such an undertaking were given there would be nothing to verify. It is an undertaking which the nuclear Powers must give on their own responsibility, on their own account, and they must have confidence in the value of their undertakings. It is not a question of having confidence in the undertaking of the other party; it is a question of the value which the different Governments attach to the solemn undertakings they give.

How can one verify the confidence which solemn undertakings can inspire in the Government which gives them? This is putting the problem in a misleading way. It is diverting attention from the substance or essence of the problem towards secondary aspects which have no relation to its essence; for the essence of the problem is that the world expects and demands from the nuclear Powers — and
it will make its voice heard -- an undertaking of this kind, which they alone can
give. Only Governments which have given such an undertaking will be able to
answer and inspire confidence, without any verification being possible or even
necessary.

In conclusion I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the fact that public
opinion expects concrete results from our negotiations; but what it wants in the
first place is to be assured that general and complete disarmament is still the
object of our negotiations.

It is, precisely, the reaching of agreement on the basic principles of a
treaty on general and complete disarmament which could assure the peoples of the
world that our Committee is making progress towards the goal to which the peoples
of the whole world aspire.

The CHAIRMAN (Czechoslovakia): Since no one else wishes to speak
today, I shall read out the text of the communique:

"The twenty-fourth meeting of the Ten Nation Committee on Disarmament
was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 19 April 1960 under the
chairmanship of the representative of Czechoslovakia.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Wednesday,
20 April 1960, at 10.30 a.m."

Since I hear no objection, I shall regard the communique as adopted.

The meeting rose at 4.0 p.m.