PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

Third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 October 1981, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. VENKATESWARAN (India)

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The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MR. ANWAR SADAT, PRESIDENT OF EGYPT

1. The CHAIRMAN expressed outrage at the assassination of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt that morning. Such acts further undermined world stability and made the possibility of peace even more remote. On behalf of the Committee, he extended profound condolences to the family of President Sadat, the families of other victims and the Egyptian people as a whole.

2. On the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mr. Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt.

PREPARATION OF A DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT (continued) (A/AC.206/13; A/AC.206/CRP.6)

3. Mr. SUMMERSHAYES (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking on behalf of the ten member States of the European Economic Community, said that the compilation of possible agenda items contained in document A/AC.206/CRP.6 represented an admirable summary of the views expressed at the Committee's preceding session and an excellent basis for further discussion of the provisional agenda at the current session.

4. The member States of the European Economic Community continued to believe that a fairly simple agenda, without too many annotations, would be preferable, so that discussion of each subject would not be limited and the interrelationship between such factors as international security, disarmament and arms control, and between disarmament and economic development could be fully brought out. They therefore preferred the first of the three formulations suggested for agenda item 8.

5. With regard to item 9, the Ten favoured including an item which permitted a full review of the implementation of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. It would be more logical, however, to list all the aspects of that review under item 9, rather than to include some aspects under that item and others under item 12. They wished to propose, therefore, that the contents of item 12 should be incorporated into item 9 by inserting the following subitem after the first subitem of item 9: "Consideration of the report submitted by the Committee on Disarmament, in particular any draft instruments transmitted by the Committee", deleting the subitem "Report of the Committee on Disarmament" and, lastly, rewording the final subitem to read, "Consideration of the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission".

6. With regard to item 13, he said that the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament would, of course, be a major element in the work of the 1982 special session, and it was therefore appropriate to place it after the various review items. Alternatively, it might be placed after the item on disarmament machinery. At all events, the Ten hoped that the special session would give proper attention to a review of the organizational aspects of the United Nations, including existing United Nations disarmament machinery, in order to ensure that the Organization created the structure best suited to disarmament efforts.
7. With regard to item 15, his delegation agreed that the nature of the document or documents that would emerge from the special session would depend on the nature of the agenda and work of that session. It therefore believed that the fourth alternative suggested for that item was the most appropriate. That alternative reflected the standard terminology for the conclusions of a session of the General Assembly and did not preclude the use, at a later stage, of a more specific title for the documents adopted by the session.

8. Mr. Okauma (Japan) said that document A/AC.206/CRP.6 provided a very good summary of the work of the Committee's preceding session and an excellent starting point for consideration of the provisional agenda at the current session. His delegation would, of course, be prepared to consider any other proposals that might be made with regard to the agenda of the 1982 special session. The provisional agenda should allow participants maximum flexibility and freedom to touch on any subject that might lead to a constructive debate at the special session and thereby help promote disarmament and arms control. The suggestions made by the United Kingdom delegation in that connexion were very interesting.

9. The Chairman suggested that, since document A/AC.206/CRP.6 appeared to enjoy broad support, the Committee should now consider the draft provisional agenda for the 1982 special session item by item. In so doing, it should take account not only of that document but also of delegations' statements and of the paper submitted by Mexico in document A/AC.206/13.

10. Mr. García Robles (Mexico) said that his delegation had not had time to consult with other delegations regarding their position on the provisional agenda proposed in document A/AC.206/CRP.6 and that, following informal consultations, he had the impression that a number of delegations would welcome the opportunity to hold consultations within and between the various regional groups before proceeding further with that item. He therefore suggested that the meeting should be adjourned to permit such consultations.

11. The Chairman said that, while he saw the merits of the suggestion made by the representative of Mexico, the time remaining at the current meeting might permit a useful exchange of views which would not preclude subsequent consultations, both within and between the regional groups, and might even contribute to them.

12. Mr. Krutczsch (German Democratic Republic) observed that the current session was especially crucial to the outcome of the 1982 special session. In the plenary General Assembly, numerous delegations had already expressed concern at the continuing arms race. On the eve of the coming special session, the United States Government had announced a new military programme which ushered in a new era in the arms race. That was reminiscent of 1978, when the first special session devoted to disarmament had been held. On the eve of that session, the United States Government had announced a new NATO programme initiating a huge arms build-up by the NATO countries.

13. His delegation agreed with the comment made by the Chairman in his introductory statement to the effect that the international community was faced /...
with an extremely complex international situation and that, rather than renounce their efforts to control the arms race, States must mobilize to take effective steps to end the arms race and promote world peace and détente. In that connexion, his delegation also endorsed the sentiments expressed in the communiqué addressed to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session by the Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegation of Non-aligned Countries and wished to echo the concern expressed at the arms race by broad sectors of international public opinion. The Committee must do all it could to ensure that the 1982 special session lived up to public expectations and lent renewed impetus to arms-control negotiations and disarmament efforts.

14. His delegation supported the preparation of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament and believed that the Committee must work consistently and without controversy for the adoption of effective disarmament measures. The best contribution the Committee's current session could make to the second special session devoted to disarmament would be to finalize the draft provisional agenda. His delegation joined those who advocated the adoption of a concise agenda, for while consensus on most of the main items might be reached, consensus on many of the subitems would not be possible. Moreover, the Preparatory Committee was meeting earlier than the First Committee, in which delegations would be able to express fully their views on preparations for the 1982 special session and resolutions which had a bearing on that session would be adopted. The outcome of the work in the First Committee should not, therefore, be prejudged by the discussion of numerous subitems in the Preparatory Committee. Accordingly, his delegation supported the first alternative proposed for item 8, in the belief that to attempt to highlight certain aspects of disarmament to the detriment of others by introducing subitems would be incompatible with the nature of a general debate.

15. His delegation had no problems with the heading proposed for item 9, but it did have reservations with regard to certain subitems of that proposal - for instance, the subitem "consideration of recommendations of and follow-up to studies initiated by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament and subsequent session". He doubted that consensus on that subitem would be possible, and he would favour its deletion. His delegation did not exclude consideration of such recommendations and studies but believed that they should not be given undue preference, since many of them were controversial. The inclusion of the subitem he had mentioned would only generate further controversy and would not advance the Committee's work.

16. His delegation could support the headings for items 10 to 13. With regard to item 14, he believed that it was more logical to discuss questions relating to disarmament machinery under item 9, since Part IV of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament concerned disarmament machinery and also contained decisions. Apart from that, his delegation could agree to a special item which would be headed "Review of institutional requirements" or "Review of the machinery in the field of disarmament" and have no subitems and an item 14 which would be headed "Measures to mobilize world public opinion to..."
stop the arms race" and comprise subitems 14 (c) to (g) as proposed in document A/AC.206/CRP.6. Lastly, his delegation had no problems with the proposal for agenda item 15.

17. In conclusion, he said that his delegation agreed with the statement by the representative of Mexico in document A/AC.206/13 that a proliferation of items on the agenda of the 1982 session on disarmament would rob it of its distinctiveness as a special session and make it resemble a regular session.

18. Mr. STEELE (Australia) said that document A/AC.206/CRP.6 represented an excellent basis for the work of the current session and agreed that the Committee should go through it item by item. He hoped that the Committee would be able to reach agreement on a provisional agenda at the current session by proceeding with the utmost caution, and he agreed with the representative of the German Democratic Republic that the Committee should beware of overloading the agenda for the special session. He therefore supported the first alternative proposed for item 8.

19. Mr. HANEI (Egypt) expressed appreciation for the condolences extended to the people and Government of Egypt on the assassination of President Sadat. That barbarous act had aroused the horror and disgust of mankind the world over.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.