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

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 26 January 1978, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

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78-55090
The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

PRINCIPAL DOCUMENTS OF THE SPECIAL SESSION (continued)

1. Mr. NUNEZ (Cuba) said that his delegation attached great importance to the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and particularly to the work of the Preparatory Committee. The ending of the arms race and the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective control represented a fundamental objective towards which the Committee must work in a realistic manner. The cause of the arms race was to be found in aggressive imperialism, which was attempting to maintain its hegemony through continued violations of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

2. His delegation was in agreement with many of the ideas contained in the documents before the Committee but would reserve comment until a later meeting. He wished, however, to mention three points in the meantime. First, the question of a world disarmament conference - in which all States would participate on the basis of equality - must not be shunted aside at the special session and the Preparatory Committee must ensure that the idea was kept alive as a mechanism for negotiations. Second, the question of foreign military bases, which represented a permanent threat to international peace and security, must not be forgotten. The third question requiring urgent attention was the threat represented by the use of force in international relations, whether, in the military, economic or political field. The principles and proposals submitted by the socialist and non-aligned countries would provide valuable guidance in that connexion.

3. Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan) said that his delegation had listened with particular interest to the statement made by the representative of France and wished to place on record the great value which his Government attached to the role of France in the field of disarmament. His delegation believed that the views already expressed in the Committee indicated a broad identity of outlook and interest, which gave hope for the successful outcome of the special session.

4. He wished to introduce two working papers which had been submitted by his delegation in the form of a draft Declaration on Disarmament (A/AC.187/91) and a draft Programme of Action on Disarmament (A/AC.187/92). Those documents were not exhaustive but were intended to focus on issues of particular concern to developing countries, which must find ways to reconcile the demands of development with the imperatives of defence.

5. The draft Declaration on Disarmament began with a general introduction covering the various facets of the disarmament problem, such as the global strategic balance, nuclear proliferation, the relations between industrialized and developing countries and the diversion of scarce resources to arms expenditures. He did not expect the special session to deal conclusively with all those issues, but a beginning could be made if agreement was reached on the goals and principles which should guide disarmament negotiations and on a programme of action to be implemented in the relatively near future. The body of the draft Declaration consisted of two parts: first, a statement of generally accepted truths which sought to place
disarmament within the global perspective as an integral part of the effort to evolve a new, stable and just international order. The second part set out principles which should guide disarmament negotiations and goals which the world community should seek to attain in the coming years. The principal task of the special session should be to facilitate disarmament negotiations and to ensure that their results would promote the security and prosperity of all States. It was important that the use of nuclear weapons should be recognized to be indefensible; that non-nuclear-weapon States should be assured that their security was not jeopardized; that efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones should be initiated in various regions; that all States should have the right to develop and acquire peaceful nuclear technology without hindrance; that expenditure on conventional arms should, in the first instance, be restrained by the major Powers in a balanced and equitable manner; and, finally, that the savings from disarmament measures should be diverted to promote economic and social development, primarily in the developing countries.

6. The draft Programme of Action must take into account not only the comprehensive programme envisaged by the General Assembly, but also the agreements, decisions and resolutions which were already in existence as well as negotiations currently under way. He agreed with the representative of Mexico on the importance of aiming at practical results. The proposed Programme of Action would be realistic if it recommended measures which could be implemented in the next few years. The draft Programme of Action submitted by his delegation was based on the principle of exploring the limits of the possible and reflected what appeared to be the general consensus regarding the necessary steps in various important areas of disarmament.

7. In the nuclear field, the most urgent task was to prohibit the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear weapons. There was general agreement that the nuclear Powers should give binding assurances that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against States which were members of nuclear-weapon-free zones. That general agreement needed to be translated into practical action. It was also necessary that the nuclear Powers should respond positively to the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolution 31/189 C and give an undertaking, in a legally binding form, not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States which were not parties to the nuclear security arrangements of some of the nuclear Powers. Such negative guarantees had the support of the General Assembly and therefore stood the best chance, among alternative formulations, of practical realization. Such initial restraints on the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear weapons in non-nuclear regions would facilitate negotiations among the nuclear-weapon States for the total prohibition of the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear weapons.

8. The world expected practical action to reduce nuclear arsenals and to prevent further developments which might increase the lethal power of nuclear weapons or reduce inhibitions against their use. The primary responsibility rested on the two major nuclear Powers. His delegation believed that steps which should be taken in the near future included, first, an agreement for a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon tests and a second agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union for a quantitative reduction and qualitative restraints on strategic nuclear
weapons and their delivery systems. The second SALT agreement should be followed by a third which would translate into actual commitments the declaration made by the two major Powers of their willingness to achieve substantial reductions of up to 50 per cent in their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. At the same time, an international agreement was essential to prevent the continued diversion of the results of scientific research to warlike purposes; developments in the field of laser technology were one example. The question of tactical nuclear weapons had to be viewed in the context of the potential threat which they posed to world peace and security. If the major nuclear Powers gave positive indications that they were prepared to give up nuclear weapons as a military option, other nuclear Powers could be expected to join in the negotiations for the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

9. In the field of nuclear proliferation, there was a tendency to overlook the large degree of consensus which had been attained through the adherence of the vast majority of States to the IAEA safeguards and of a smaller, but very important, number of countries to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The discussions during the thirty-second session of the General Assembly had shown that, while the majority of countries remained attached to the goal of non-proliferation, they were unwilling to accept the implication that the development of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, particularly in the developing countries, posed peculiar dangers. It was encouraging that the General Assembly had been able to adopt, by consensus, a set of guidelines on the transfer and development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. His delegation was convinced that, if all concerned were inspired by those guidelines in the practical policies they followed, the goal of non-proliferation would be brought appreciably closer. He was, however, concerned at the 15 guidelines issued by the so-called London Club, in so far as they tended to conflict with the spirit of the principles adopted by the General Assembly. If non-proliferation was to be feasible, it was imperative that all nuclear facilities, including those which had been operating for years outside the IAEA safeguard system, should be brought under international control and inspection, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.

10. On the question of the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace, his delegation's working paper enumerated steps which needed to be taken and which reflected the provisions of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

11. The provisions of his delegation's draft Programme of Action regarding "other weapons of mass destruction" did not differ greatly from the ideas contained in other papers. In the area of conventional weapons, his delegation's suggestions reflected generally accepted propositions and emphasized the primary responsibility of the major Powers. His delegation shared the concern of the representative of Japan concerning the transfer of conventional arms. The quantity and type of arms transferred was relevant in the context of strengthening peace and reducing the danger of war in various regions of the world; no less important, however, was the question of the balance of forces among the countries of a given region. In that connexion, it was important to take account not only of the trade in weapons but also of the indigenous capacity for the production of armaments.
12. The special session represented perhaps the first concerted effort by the United Nations to evolve a unified approach to the problems of disarmament. Disarmament was a complex process involving difficulties of definition, balance, verification and conflicting political purposes. Those difficulties must be overcome in the common interest of easing the threat of destruction which hung over the whole world. All nations and peoples had a vital stake in disarmament, but the success of the forthcoming negotiations would ultimately depend on the political will of States, particularly the major Powers, to make progress towards that goal.

13. **Mr. UPADHYAY** (Nepal) said that his delegation had noted with interest the proposals which had been submitted but did not wish to comment on them for the moment. He had, however, found great merit in the proposal by the representative of Mexico for a Three-Year Disarmament Plan, as a purely transitional measure, and for a second special session devoted to disarmament at which a comprehensive programme of disarmament would be adopted (A/AC.187/89). He also welcomed the statement by the representative of Japan that nuclear disarmament should be given the highest priority but that stress should also be laid on the need for a reduction in conventional arms and for a comprehensive study in that connexion as a first step. He also welcomed the statement by the representative of France.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL SESSION**

14. **Mr. UPADHYAY** (Nepal) said he agreed with the Chairman that items 1 to 7 of the provisional agenda for the special session could be disposed of during the first day. He believed that 10 days would be needed to complete the general debate, so that 11 or 12 days would remain for other meetings. To expedite the work of the special session, he believed that it would be important that informal discussions should start during the general debate.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.