Twenty-ninth Session
FIRST COMMITTEE

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND AND FORTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 10 December 1974, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: -

Mr. ORTIZ de ROZAS (Argentina)

Rapporteur:

Mr. COSTA LOBO (Portugal)

- Statement by the Chairman
- Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security: report of the Secretary-General [367]

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The co-operation of delegations in strictly observing this time-limit would be greatly appreciated.
STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I would first like to correct an error in the drafting of the Journal. In the summary of the work of the Committees, the fourth paragraph concerning the First Committee states:

"Following a procedural discussion in which the representatives of Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Cuba, Poland, Sri Lanka and the Upper Volta participated ..."

The error to which I am referring is that Upper Volta did not participate in the procedural discussion and therefore the name of that country should not appear.

AGENDA ITEM 36


Mr. STASHEVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation takes pleasure in being the first speaker in the discussion on the strengthening of international security. We see a certain symbolism in this fact because this question has been discussed in the United Nations, indeed for several years, on the initiative precisely of the Soviet Union.

The question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security now before the First Committee is one of the most important political issues on the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The general debate of this session of the General Assembly has shown that an overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations favour international détente and the extension of this détente to the whole world.
This is shown by the great attention paid by the Member States of the United Nations to the problem of the strengthening of international security. At a time when the international atmosphere is improving, this problem is acquiring ever greater current importance. The United Nations finds new prospects opening up before it in this field. What is required is that in accordance with the tasks of the United Nations, as defined in the Charter, fuller use should be made of the capacity of the United Nations to strengthen the positive trend in the international sphere, to strengthen peace and protect the political independence and territorial integrity of all States.

At the present time the trend towards the strengthening of peace and security of the peoples is growing and the process of détente in international relations is being fortified.
The principle of peaceful coexistence and co-operation among States with different social systems is constantly gaining ground as a fundamental principle of international relations. Positive developments are spreading to new spheres of relations among all States and are putting down roots in all regions and continents of the world. The favourable changes in the international climate have been influenced and continue to be influenced by the efforts of many States on a bilateral basis, on a regional scale and at world level, above all within the United Nations.

At this stage an important means of strengthening international security is the expansion of co-operation and mutual understanding in all spheres between States with different social systems and the quest for peaceful means of solving international problems so as to strengthen world peace and remove for ever from the life of mankind the threat of nuclear war. This is a course which the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have persistently and constantly followed in their relations with States with other social systems. These efforts have already produced good results as far as the strengthening of peace is concerned. Considerable beneficial effect on the whole international situation has resulted from a radical improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. For example, the achievement in Soviet-American relations of progress towards the establishment of guarantees against the outbreak of nuclear conflict and war in general is of particular significance in this respect. The results of the recent Soviet-American summit meeting of 23 and 24 November in the Vladivostok region have provided a new stimulus to the strengthening of international détente and a constructive contribution to the strengthening of peace as a whole.

The improvement of co-operation between the USSR and France by the joint efforts of the two countries has made a considerable contribution to the improvement of the political climate both within and outside Europe. The recent visit of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrade Brezhnev, to France, the talks between the Soviet and French leaders and the conclusion of an agreement between them have shown the unchanging nature of the policy of agreement and co-operation pursued by both States. This is an important positive factor for the enhancement of détente in the world and the strengthening of international security.
In Europe there have been certain important positive changes which have benefited peace and co-operation among States. We refer in particular in this respect to the Soviet-French communiqué of 7 December 1974 published after the conclusion of the Soviet-French summit meeting. It says, inter alia:

"The parties have devoted particular attention to the development of the situation in Europe. They have expressed satisfaction that the improvement of relations between the countries of East and West is expanding the possibilities for Europe to make a contribution to international détente. For their part, the Soviet Union and France will contribute actively to the promotion of such development, and will encourage it."

One of the main ways of improving the situation in Europe and enhancing détente is by ensuring the success of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The Soviet Union advocates the conclusion of that Conference in the near future by the adoption at summit level of decisions of fundamental importance for the future of the peoples of Europe and of peace throughout the world. The further strengthening of peace and security in the European continent would certainly be promoted by the achievement of agreement in the Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe.

In our view, of course, détente cannot and must not be the privilege of one continent only. The positive influence of the process of détente will in one way or another make itself felt everywhere and it is spreading to the Asian continent also. In the countries of Asia there is a growing interest in the idea of the creation of a system of security by the joint efforts of the States concerned. The idea of peace and security in Asia on the basis of joint efforts is not new, of course. In the light of their past experience the Asian States have long sought an approach to the realization of this idea. To make Asia and Africa continents of peace and co-operation was the sense of the 10 principles enunciated at the historic Bandung Conference in 1955. Important initiatives to strengthen peace in Asia have been taken in recent years by countries pursuing a policy of non-alignment, in particular at the Fourth Conference of the non-aligned countries in Algiers. It is becoming increasingly important to convert into practical reality the idea of the creation by joint efforts of a system of security in Asia.
Nevertheless, it is clear that notwithstanding the considerable positive changes in the world it is far from true to say that all the focal points of armed conflict have been eliminated. In a number of regions of the planet there continue to exist highly inflammable situations, and partisans of the preservation of international tension are continuing to do everything they can to maintain that situation and retard the process of détente. In South Viet-Nam the corrupt dictatorial régime continues to exist, thanks to outside help, and is trying to undermine the attainment of the objectives of the Paris Agreement. In Cambodia the war continues too. The situation on the Korean peninsula continues to be complex owing to the continuing foreign interference in the affairs of the Korean people and the presence of foreign troops in southern Korea. Tension exists in the eastern Mediterranean still and there is a particularly dangerous situation in the Middle East where the provocative acts of Israel continue, acts which are directed towards undermining the course of a peaceful settlement and making it possible continued occupation of the Arab lands.

In the light of this, the delegation of the Soviet Union considers that the question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security will retain its topical importance as long as the influential forces which are acting counter to the United Nations Charter and against détente continue to exist and to foster the arms race, a return to the cold war and suppression of the liberation movements of the peoples.

The strengthening of peace and vertical improvement of the international climate is something in which all the peoples of the world have a fundamental interest. Several decades ago the Soviet Union advanced and has subsequently consistently defended in its foreign policy a thesis imbued with a profound love of peace: peace is indivisible. This thesis still preserves its topical nature and current importance. It is impossible to be an advocate of détente and co-operation in one part of the world and fan the sparks of tension and mistrust in other parts of the world. The only truly peaceful policy is one which is directed towards détente and ensures respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence of States in all parts of the world. If international
security is to be strengthened and the terms of the Declaration in this
tconnexion to be implemented it is essential that sustained efforts be made
to eliminate the focal points of war which are burning or smouldering and to
create a potential military threat in a number of parts of the world.
This is why the Soviet Union has consistently advocated a thorough-going implementation of the Paris Agreements on Viet-Nam; cessation of the war in Cambodia in accordance with the genuine and expressed desires of the patriotic forces of that country; and withdrawal of foreign troops from South Korea.

Every day it becomes more and more obvious that the focal points of tension in the Middle East must be eliminated and that a just and lasting peace must be established in that region. The Soviet Union believes that a definitive settlement in the Middle East is possible only with the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from the territories occupied in 1967, and only if the security and independence of all countries of that region are guaranteed, and only if the lawful national rights of the other people of Palestine are protected, including their right to self-determination and to their own State. All of this can be achieved within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference set up in accordance with the United Nations decisions for that precise purpose. The Soviet Union, together with other States, advocates the resumption at the earliest possible date of that Conference.

At this session of the General Assembly a step was taken in the right direction towards the solution of the Middle East problem when the General Assembly, with the participation of representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, adopted useful decisions on the Palestine question.

It is likewise essential to extinguish the hot-bed of tension in the eastern Mediterranean and to resolve the question of Cyprus. The Soviet Union, from the very beginning of events in Cyprus, has constantly championed the inalienable rights of the Republic of Cyprus. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Cypriot State must be preserved; all foreign troops must be withdrawn from Cyprus; the Cypriots must be afforded the possibility of resolving their internal affairs on their own, free from outside interference. A just and durable settlement of the Cyprus question can be obtained through strict respect for the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly on Cyprus. The proposal of the Soviet Union for the convening of an international conference on Cyprus within the framework of the United Nations and with the participation of the parties involved,
the members of the Security Council and an appropriate group of non-aligned countries, is as important and relevant today as in the past. A positive solution to the Cyprus question would not only enhance the authority of the United Nations but would also make a solid contribution to the strengthening of international peace and security.

One of the most important areas in which efforts have been made in recent years to promote international détente has been the measures to halt and abolish the arms race and to avert the threat of nuclear warfare. Among those measures may be mentioned, primarily, the Soviet-American agreements reached from 1972 to 1974, on mutual relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, on the prevention of nuclear war, the limitation of strategic arms and the limitation of underground nuclear testing. Of particular significance is the agreement reached at the recent Soviet-American summit meeting in the "Minsk" region on the conclusion of a long-term agreement on the restriction of offensive strategic arms of the Soviet Union and the United States for a period extending to the end of 1985.

In recent years, too, a number of multilateral agreements have been concluded that put restraints on the arms race in many different ways and that limit the material basis for it. These include the agreement on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon testing in three environments, the agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the prohibition of the deployment on the sea-bed and the ocean floor of weapons of mass destruction, the prohibition of bacteriological weapons, and so forth. The fact that those agreements were concluded and that they are now playing an important role in limiting the arms race is very much to the credit of the United Nations. There are sceptics who have been trying to belittle the significance of the agreements achieved in restraining the arms race. But it is not difficult to realize that the situation in the world would be much more unstable, much more dangerous today, and that the scope of the ruinous competition in the production and accumulation of the most destructive means of warfare would have been far greater, were it not for the existence of all those agreements.
It is impossible, of course, to close one's eyes to the fact that, notwithstanding the détente in the political sphere, no end has as yet been put to the arms race. The increased sophistication and accumulation of armaments continues, carrying with it the threat of the outbreak of war, poisoning with the venom of distrust and suspicion the new era emerging in international relations and imperilling the atmosphere of détente in the world. The monster of military preparation is devouring vast amounts of resources so necessary to all States for the solution of acute and pressing problems of economic and social development, elimination of the backwardness of the developing countries, provision of food, energy and environmental protection, and other requirements of the world's population. Each year in the entire world the arms race consumes about $250,000 million. This is a fact well known to all. It is an amount that exceeds the national income of all the developing countries of Asia and Africa -- and this at a time when hundreds of millions of people in the world are lacking in food and other prime necessities of life. The developing countries seem to be drawn more and more into the dangerous vortex of the arms race. The destructive consequences of that race inflict suffering even on those countries that do not participate in it, since they inevitably suffer from the harmful effects it has on the world economic system. The economic upheavals that we have all been witnessing are likewise related to it. It is impossible to find a country the economy of which has not in one way or another felt the burden of armaments. Grave economic difficulties are now being experienced by the highly developed Western countries, and a variety of arguments are advanced to explain these menacing phenomena. But if one analyses the true underlying reasons for them, only one conclusion can be drawn, and that conclusion is confirmed by the facts that come to one's notice every day, every hour indeed. They are the direct result of a decade of unrestrained arms race and accumulation of weapons, of the mindless tossing to the winds of vast international material resources. Particularly severe disruptions are suffered by
the developing countries. In this respect, the madness of the arms race and its harmful effects on the peoples of the world are particularly evident at a time when the problem of the development of the countries of the third world has become one of the most important issues on the agenda of the international community. The General Assembly has been discussing and adopting such important documents as the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.
In situations such as this, in our opinion, the question of complementing political détente by détente in the military sphere, through practical measures to limit the arms race and to bring about disarmament, acquires particular importance. It is necessary to use the positive changes in the international political sphere in order to find real agreements in the sphere of disarmament in order to check the arms race. That is why both bilateral and multilateral efforts in the sphere of disarmament must be multiplied so as to strengthen international peace and security and by concrete deeds really to expand the assistance to developing countries for their economic development on a scale commensurate with the scope of that problem.

The United Nations is making a big contribution to the lessening of international tension and the prevention of the threat of war. In recent years at the United Nations a number of practical decisions have been adopted designed to put an end to the arms race. It is important now that those decisions should be given effect. It is important to make sure that they are fully and effectively implemented.

Among those decisions is the solemn declaration of the General Assembly on the prohibition of the use of force and the simultaneous permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. It is essential that that declaration should acquire binding force for all States, and the Security Council is obliged to adopt a corresponding decision in that respect.

As is well known, the General Assembly has adopted a decision on a world disarmament conference, and subsequently at its last three sessions, including this one, it has confirmed that decision. This is a clear expression of the desire of the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations for authentic disarmament and for peace. The time has come now for the Ad Hoc Committee on the convening of the conference, the mandate of which has been renewed at this session of the General Assembly, to embark upon the elaboration of concrete recommendations regarding practical questions connected with the convening of the conference. Many have become convinced now that to indulge in any further delays in the preparation for and convening of the conference, no matter what reasons are given to justify those delays, would in fact be simply playing into the hands of the opponents of disarmament and the opponents of détente and peace.
Neither are there any grounds for delays in the implementation of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session calling for the reduction of the military budgets of States permanent members of the Security Council by 10 per cent and the utilization of part of the funds thus saved to provide assistance to developing countries. The implementation of that proposal would be of great benefit to the developing countries and also to the States carrying out such a reduction. Those funds could be used as additional assistance to those developing countries where the problem of food and development is most acute. The implementation of that decision by the General Assembly would be an indication of an authentic concern for peace and for the well-being of the developing countries and, in that sense, it would be a contribution to the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security.

Only recently the General Assembly, by an absolute majority of votes, adopted a proposal for the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military purposes, a proposal made on the initiative of the Soviet Union. This is of great significance for the strengthening of peace and international security. There is no doubt that the elaboration of an international agreement on the prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military purposes would prevent the extension of the arms race to a new sphere of human activity and would be a valuable measure in the cause of the strengthening of peace.

Sometimes one hears various developing countries at the United Nations saying that questions of disarmament are matters within the sphere of competence only of the major military Powers, which are the only ones that should concern themselves with that problem. That is a highly doubtful argument. We are convinced that the problem of the cessation of the arms race and the strengthening of international security can be resolved successfully only by the joint efforts of all States -- large, medium and small, developed and developing. The question arises: can it be said that it is only the peoples of the great Powers who are interested in this since it is those Powers which have large armed forces and powerful armaments? Surely it is the peoples of all States who will themselves
experience all the horrors of nuclear war if it does not prove possible to avert and prevent it. Economic deprivation and the dangers related to the continuing arms race are already being felt precisely by the peoples of all countries.

This session of the General Assembly in its businesslike and very thorough discussion of questions of disarmament has once again shown the desire of an absolute majority of States to check the arms race as soon as possible and to take effective measures towards realistic disarmament. This mood of the overwhelming majority of Members of the United Nations must be properly reflected in a resolution to be adopted by the Assembly on the question of the strengthening of international security.

In addition to the positive decisions of the recent past adopted by the General Assembly which will, without any doubt, help to strengthen international security and aid the implementation of the Declaration on that question, it is essential also to note the completion of the many years of painstaking work on the preparation of a definition of "aggression" adopted at this session of the General Assembly. The adoption of the definition of "aggression" and the conversion of that definition into a document binding on States, would certainly help to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council in the implementation of its functions under the Charter in the strengthening of international peace and security.

Impressive progress has been made in recent years also in the struggle for the elimination of the vestiges of colonialism, for national independence and economic liberation, and against racism and apartheid. As a result of the stubborn struggle of the people of the Portuguese colonies and the victory of the democratic forces of Portugal, the last colonial empire on African soil has collapsed. The irreversible nature of this evolution of the peoples is also reflected in the decisions of the sixth special session of the General Assembly and the adoption at this session of the Assembly of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and other documents. But that struggle is not over, and will not be over so long as the dark shadows of colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination remain in the world, together with the manifestations of
economic oppression and inequality. The General Assembly, therefore, cannot relax its efforts in this sphere either, which is very important for the strengthening of peace and international security.

The delegation of the Soviet Union considers that the culmination of the discussion on the strengthening of international security at this session should be the preparation of measures which will promote the strengthening of the process of détente, the expansion of peaceful co-operation among States, and the lessening of the threat of the outbreak of nuclear war. The General Assembly must recommend such measures as will help to promote the efforts of all peace-loving States to bring about a fuller use for the strengthening of peace of the opportunities offered by the United Nations, opportunities which are now opening up in connexion with the ongoing process of international détente.

The adoption at this session of the General Assembly of such important decisions as the resolution on the Cyprus question, on Palestine and on South Africa, all of which are directed towards the defence of the rights and interests of peoples, demonstrates the increased political capacity of the United Nations, and the great sense of responsibility and activeness shown by the majority of Member States. This is a convincing sign that the United Nations, and its Charter, has available to it great and as yet unused political potential.
The General Assembly must consider comprehensive measures being undertaken by States to implement the Declaration and to recommend new concrete measures to further implement its provisions. We are convinced that as a result of a businesslike and constructive consideration of the question of the implementation of the Declaration, the General Assembly will contribute to the further normalization of the international atmosphere, strengthen the process of détente and make it irreversible. We feel that by proceeding thus the General Assembly will be capable of making a valuable contribution to the solution of the important and pressing international problems facing the international community and the Organization.

As has been shown by the far-reaching discussions on the important items on the agenda of the session of the General Assembly now nearing its end, the collective efforts and co-operation of all States are required for the successful solution of highly acute problems such as disarmament, development, energy, food. Those and other problems can be resolved only if détente is further strengthened and extended to the whole world -- in other words, only in conditions of the strengthening of peace and security.

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, in a statement made in Paris on 5 December, said,

"One thing is indisputable: a necessary condition for the solution of all these problems is a guarantee of stable peace in the development and enhancement of the process of détente. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, we can quite definitely say that we always have been and always will be a reliable partner in the struggle to attain those aims."

The General Assembly must make its full contribution to the cause of the further strengthening of peace and détente by adopting a well-prepared decision on the strengthening of international security with the participation of all Member States.
The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I have no more speakers for this meeting. I would therefore draw the attention of members to the following.

Four delegations are listed to speak at tomorrow morning’s meeting. Only one delegation is listed to speak at the afternoon meeting. In the absence of other speakers for the afternoon meeting, that representative has agreed to speak on Thursday morning, which brings to three the number of delegations listed to speak at Thursday morning’s meeting. For the meeting on Thursday afternoon, nine delegations are listed to speak.

As I said yesterday, the work of the First Committee must be concluded on Friday. If possible, it should be concluded at the morning meeting; if not, at the very latest at the afternoon meeting. I therefore believe it appropriate to propose to the First Committee that the list of speakers for this debate be closed at the conclusion of tomorrow morning’s meeting, at 1 p.m. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that procedure is acceptable to the Committee.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I understand that a draft resolution on the strengthening of international security has just been submitted. It will be circulated as quickly as possible in all languages, so the debate will be facilitated. In view of the fact that that draft resolution has been presented I do not believe it is too optimistic to believe that we shall be able to conclude our work by Friday morning, or, at the latest, by Friday afternoon.

Since the Committee has agreed that the list of speakers will be closed tomorrow at 1 p.m., I should like to ask all delegations wishing to speak to communicate their names to the Secretary so that our work may proceed as quickly as possible.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.