Twenty-eighth Session

FIRST COMMITTEE

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 26 November 1973, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BORCH (Denmark)
Rapporteur: Mr. de SOTO (Peru)

- World Disarmament Conference /32/ (continued)
- Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons /35/ (continued)
- Organization of work

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be distributed as soon as possible.

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent in quadruplicate within three working days, to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, Room LX-2332, and incorporated in a copy of the record.


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

73-71246/A
AGENDA ITEMS 32 and 35 (continued)

WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE
CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS (A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1)

The CHAIRMAN: We shall concentrate this afternoon on agenda item 35, Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. As representatives are aware, the sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1 agreed at a previous meeting that they would enter into consultations with other members of the Committee with the aim of reaching a mutually agreeable compromise. I am informed that those consultations have been proceeding satisfactorily but that the sponsors have not yet had an opportunity to discuss among themselves the lastest amendments that have been suggested. I propose therefore that the meeting be suspended for 15 minutes to give the sponsors an opportunity to agree on the final text they wish to submit. They have assured me that after that suspension it should be possible to conclude our consideration of agenda item 35 very quickly.

I have consulted the representatives who are particularly interested in the item being discussed in the plenary meeting of the General Assembly this afternoon, and they have agreed to the short suspension I have proposed. In the absence of objections from any other representatives, therefore, I shall take it that the Committee agrees that the meeting should be suspended for 15 minutes.
The meeting was suspended at 3.10 p.m. and resumed at 3.25 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: We shall now continue our consideration of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1, under agenda item 35.

Mr. MIHAJLOVIC (Yugoslavia): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1), I am pleased to be able to advise you of the compromise arrived at, at the very last minute of our deliberations, with the representatives of several countries who, during the meeting on Friday last, appealed to the sponsors to submit a new revision of the draft resolution in order to make it possible for them to vote for it.

The compromise we have arrived at is the result of the spirit of co-operation and goodwill shown by all concerned with a view to achieving the objectives set forth in the revised draft resolution. The sponsors feel that the new revision of the draft resolution does not mean any change of their position in principle. The newly revised draft resolution will include, in the first preambular paragraph, a reference to General Assembly resolution 2603 B (XXIV), using the same language used in last year's resolution.

Therefore, the beginning of the first preambular paragraph will read, "Reaffirming its resolution 2603 B (XXIV)"; and the rest of the paragraph will continue as before.

The next revision concerns operative paragraph 3, which will now refer to "the complete realization of the objective as set forth in the present resolution". The complete text of the new operative paragraph 3 will therefore read:

"3. Requests the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to continue negotiations, as a matter of high priority, on the problem of chemical and bacteriological (biological) methods of warfare, with a view to reaching early agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and for their elimination from the arsenal of all States, for the complete realization of the objective as set forth in the present resolution."

We are convinced that on the basis of the draft resolution as newly revised the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament would be able to pursue meaningful negotiations for the complete realization of the objectives embodied in it, and I hope that it will win the unanimous approval of the Committee.
The CHAIRMAN: Members of the Committee have heard the representative of Yugoslavia read out the amendments to the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1 that have been accepted by the sponsors.

As no other representative wishes to speak, I declare that we are now in the voting stage on the revised draft resolution, in accordance with rule 130 of the rules of procedure.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. MIKANAGU (Burundi) (interpretation from French): Taking the floor after the vote on a number of draft resolutions on general and complete disarmament, and before we vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1 entitled "Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons," the delegation of Burundi would like to state the following.

Our unwavering attachment to peace and our profound aspiration to disarmament dictated that we vote in favour of the various draft resolutions that have already been put to the vote in the Committee, convinced as we were of the spirit of peace that inspired the sponsors of those draft resolutions.

That is why, consistent with that line of conduct, we will also vote in favour of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1.

In the field of general and complete disarmament, what use would the delegation of Burundi be to the First Committee if it came here only to vote on the different draft resolutions?

In point of fact, as the President of Zaire, His Excellency General Mobutu Sese Seko, stated at the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, in Africa we do not manufacture even a single bullet. Therefore, we have no problems in regard to the outlawing of nuclear weapons or the prohibition of the development, manufacture and production of toxic weapons and their destruction and so forth.

The only weapons which we at one time manufactured were bows and arrows, and we have already destroyed them.

Now we are unarmed, confronting a world that is armed to the teeth, a world that is still governed by the law of the jungle-- that is, the law of the strongest.
(Mr. Nikanagu, Burundi)

And so we are frightened, as a sheep would be surrounded by lions and wolves that are constantly on the alert to share its skin and bones.

It is thus that our wealth and assets have always been stolen from us by force and that our forefathers were tracked down in the brush and sold as slaves; surely that was pure and simple obedience to the law of the jungle.

And yet we are not unduly afraid for we believe that with the passage of time mankind itself will be so terrified by its own folly that that terror will give birth to a new order which will put an end to the law of the jungle.

However, we have not yet reached that stage. Thus the delegation of Burundi hopes not only for the destruction of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons as well as the destruction of nuclear arsenals, but also for the destruction of all weapons in general so that peace can prevail on this earth for the small as well as for the great, for the weak as well as for the strong.

Then our work will have a clear objective, free of all hypocrisy and ambiguity. We are deeply hopeful that a flame will now be kindled for the salvation of mankind, and we also are hopeful that one day we shall see the lion lie down with the lamb.
Mr. LIN (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation would like to make the following comments on the draft resolution on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons.

Proceeding from the position of opposing wars of aggression, supporting armed self defence and defending the interests of the oppressed nations and peoples, the Chinese Government and people have always supported the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of chemical and bacteriological weapons. Back in 1952, the Chinese Government formally issued a statement recognizing and ratifying the 1925 Geneva Protocol from the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gas, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Moreover, together with the peoples of the world, China has firmly opposed and severely condemned the United States for using chemical and other weapons on a large scale in its aggressive war in Viet Nam, and the Portuguese colonialists for their towering crime of waging chemical warfare, and has strongly demanded the genuine and effective prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

We deem it necessary to point out that the super-Powers are now using the question of prohibiting chemical weapons to peddle the fraud of sham disarmament. For many years, while trumpeting the prohibition of chemical weapons, they have devoted enormous manpower and material resources to the study, production, equipment and stockpiling of chemical weapons in preparing to launch and wage chemical warfare in the future. One super-Power still refuses to ratify the 1925 Geneva Protocol, while the other super-Power, the Soviet Union, dished up a so called "draft convention" on the prohibition of chemical weapons on 28 March 1972, in which it talked profusely about the "prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and ... their destruction", but made no mention whatsoever of the question of "prohibiting the use" of those weapons, and allowed each State party to "withdraw from the Convention if it decides that extraordinary events have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country".
All this has barefacedly left a leeway for the two super-Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to use chemical weapons for aggression. The conclusion of such a "convention" will only provide the super-Powers and world imperialism with a legal cover for their use of chemical weapons, thus deceiving and lulling the people of various countries by creating a false sense of security. This is absolutely intolerable.

We have long pointed out that the so-called "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and on their Destruction" concocted by the two super Powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, is a mere tool of the two super Powers for peddling their disarmament fraud. Moreover, the Chiang Kai shek clique, which had long been spurned by the Chinese people, was allowed to put its signature on it. We firmly oppose this convention and we have long exposed its true nature.

Based on the above position, the Chinese delegation will not participate in the voting on the draft resolution before us.

Mr. SCHAUFFLE (United States of America): The United States will vote affirmatively for the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1. We appreciate that the co sponsors have acceded to our request to make a number of small changes in the draft resolution which permit us to vote affirmatively. As Ambassador Martin explained last Friday before this Committee, while these are small changes they are important ones for us. We know that some strong feelings exist regarding the substance of the draft resolution before us. Therefore, we think that the spirit of conciliation which has been shown in these last hours of our work on this draft resolution augurs well for serious and co operative work in the future. The United States remains committed to seeking effective limitations on chemical weapons. We will continue our efforts to make progress in this important area.
The CHAIRMAN: As no other representatives wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting, we shall now proceed to vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1, as amended orally.

The draft resolution was adopted by 98 votes to none, with 1 abstention.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call on representatives who wish to explain their votes.

Mr. von FLEANDT (Finland): The delegation of Finland has voted in favour of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1 on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons as an expression of our strong support for efforts to achieve an effective ban on those weapons and in our belief that among the arms control measures currently discussed at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament the chemical weapons issue is the one most ripe for solution. The Finnish Government has also endeavoured to make a concrete and practical contribution to world peace by its project designed to create, on a national basis, a chemical weapons control capacity for possible future international use.

At the same time, my delegation expresses its satisfaction that the wide measure of agreement which has characterized our efforts to progress towards a ban on chemical weapons could again this year be achieved. We are therefore encouraged in our hope that next year the CCD, whose task it is to conduct actual negotiations on this subject, will be able to proceed to the elaboration of an agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and for their destruction, in conformity with the provisions of article IX of the biological weapons Treaty.
Mr. RAPIN (France) (interpretation from French): This year again my delegation was obliged to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution on the banning of the production and stockpiling of both biological and chemical weapons.

I should like to make some comments on our position so as to avoid any possible misunderstanding on the sense that should be attached to our abstention.

First of all, with regard to the problem of the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925, reference to which is made in the resolution that has just been adopted, it goes without saying that France, which is a depositary of that Protocol, can only very much wish that the Powers which have not yet adhered to it will do so.

With regard to biological weapons, my delegation has had occasion in previous years to note that the Convention which was adopted seemed to it not very satisfactory because procedure of control and effective verification, which would be applicable internationally, was not included therein. This for us was a fundamental condition for our adherence. However, I should like to remind the Committee that the French Government, without even waiting for the entry into force of the Convention, undertook national legislation which was very strict, providing for the prohibition on its territory of the development, production, stockpiling and acquisition of any biological agents not designed for peaceful purposes. The law of 3 June 1972 provides, furthermore, for administrative punitive and penal actions to be taken against violators and establishes a very strict procedure for verifying and controlling the situation. Applications relating to every physical and moral person resident in French territory had the effect of binding the French Government itself which would not be able to undertake the production of those weapons for its own national defence, even if it so wished. In a free and democratic country like France, where opinion controls power, such an action would be immediately denounced, and would therefore not be possible.
France remains also favourable to the principle of the prohibition of the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We would hope that this will be as broad as possible and would apply to all chemical agents which can be used for military purposes. In this area, too, it is making an effective control and verification procedure on the international level a condition for its adherence to any possible convention.

My delegation notes that in this respect the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1 does not record any progress over the past. However, if my delegation, in spite of its agreement on the principles underlying the draft resolution just adopted, has been obliged to abstain in the vote, it was also because it could not give its agreement to the procedures adopted therein, in particular the reference for study of this draft to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. I shall not go back over the motives for our reservations with regard to that body, and the reasons already expressed in this Committee which prompted us not to take part in its work. We do not misunderstand the difficulties -- which are, of course, great -- which may be given rise to by the preparation of a convention on chemical weapons. However, we must note, among other things, that for many years the progress achieved on this subject by the Geneva Committee is practically nil. It seems to us that people may have legitimate doubts about its capacity to prepare a convention of this type one day. We shall continue to believe that its composition and procedures do not bring together the necessary favourable conditions for the success of its work.

However that may be, if the Committee on Disarmament were to succeed one day in presenting us with a draft resolution on the prohibition of chemical weapons, we would examine it without any pre-conceptions and would judge it on its merits.
Mr. HARMON (Liberia): Liberia greatly welcomes this major step and has voted in favour of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/L.653/Rev.1 because we consider it as a strong and encouraging sign for effective progress in this important area of world concern. We sincerely hope that, as we move towards the establishment of a real protocol for the prevention of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and bacteriological methods of warfare, those countries which have certain reservations will take into consideration their universal responsibility to mankind everywhere.

Mr. ROSCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation would like to make two comments on the statement of the delegation of China.

The first comment, which did not surprise us at all, is the fact that the delegation of China said that it would take no part in the vote. This position of China was demonstrated at previous sessions of the General Assembly -- at the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions. In all cases where there has been a question of international co-operation in the field of limiting the arms race or disarmament, the Chinese delegation as a rule has been hiding its hands under the table. That has become its normal customary practice, which shows that China has no disposition at the present time to undertake any kind of co-operation whatsoever in the field of limiting the arms race in any field whatsoever. Therefore, this position is by no means surprising to us.

Secondly, we should like to comment that the Chinese delegation has done everything in its power to distort the actual state of affairs which prevails at the present time with regard to the question which is being considered here in the First Committee -- the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries are the most active champions of the prohibition of chemical weapons. In a number of cases the Soviet Union has come forward with concrete proposals designed to achieve those objectives.
In particular, in March 1972 we submitted a draft in the Disarmament Committee on the total prohibition of chemical weapons, that is, the prohibition of the production, development and the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons. Now the Chinese delegation is trying to suggest that we are not raising the question of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. The Soviet delegation, like the delegations of other socialist countries, has repeatedly explained the situation that the prohibition of chemical weapons it has practically already been established as a generally acknowledged norm of international law by the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925. If we raised this question once again in the draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, we might by so doing be weakening the importance of the Geneva Protocol which prohibits the use of chemical weapons.
Since the Geneva Protocol created universally acknowledged norms of international law prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, it would be quite wrong to insist once again on discussing a convention on the total prohibition of chemical weapons and to raise the question of prohibiting the use of chemical weapons.

For these reasons, the appropriate references were made in the draft convention, and it was acknowledged that it was not appropriate to raise for discussion a question which had already been settled.

In this case I should simply like to draw attention to the fact that all the attempts of the Chinese delegation to distort the realities, to distort the situation, representing the Soviet Union as not being against the use of chemical weapons, are only designed to muddy the waters and create a distorted impression of the position of an individual State and also to get out of taking part in the work of international co-operation in the matter of prohibiting chemical weapons.

That was precisely the point we wanted to make in connexion with the attempt made here to cast shadows where there is only daylight.

The CHAIRMAN: As there are no further remarks, I declare that the First Committee has concluded its consideration of agenda item 35, 'Chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons'.

The First Committee has now concluded its deliberations on all the agenda items relating to disarmament allocated to it by the General Assembly, with one exception, namely, agenda item 32, "World Disarmament Conference". That item will be taken up when the informal negotiations make it appropriate to do so.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Experience shows that if a Committee is ahead of its time-table the members adapt to that new situation by not being ready to proceed immediately to the next item on the agenda. Thus tomorrow we should have been ready to begin our consideration of agenda item 39, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security", but the name of only
one representative is inscribed on the list of speakers. With all respect to him, I do not think the Committee should be convened to hear only one speaker. Hence, there will be no meetings of the Committee tomorrow.

It is my intention to close the list of speakers on agenda item 39 at the end of Wednesday afternoon's meeting. I know that that is rather early in the debate to close the list of speakers but I think it is appropriate in this case since I have now given members advance notice of my intention to close the list at that time and since only 10 meetings have been allocated for our consideration of the item.

The question of Korea had been on the agenda of the plenary meeting of the General Assembly scheduled for tomorrow morning. However, it appears that the report on that question will not be ready by tomorrow morning. The Rapporteur has assured me that he will do his utmost to have it ready for consideration by the plenary Assembly on Wednesday morning.

If the report on the question of Korea is indeed ready for consideration by the plenary Assembly on Wednesday morning and if that question is taken up as the first item on the Assembly's agenda, the First Committee will meet immediately after the Assembly has concluded its consideration of the question of Korea.

In the expectation that that will prove to be possible, I now adjourn the Committee until Wednesday morning immediately following the Assembly's consideration of the question of Korea.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.