VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 12TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ORTIZ DE ROZAS (Argentina)

CONTENTS


AGENDA ITEM 10: ADOPTION OF A DECLARATION ON DISARMAMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 11: ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON DISARMAMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN DISARMAMENT AND OF THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON DISARMAMENT, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR THE QUESTION OF CONVENING A WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (continued)
The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 9, 10, 11 and 12 (continued)


ADOPTION OF A DECLARATION ON DISARMAMENT

ADOPTION OF A PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN DISARMAMENT AND OF THE INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON DISARMAMENT, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR THE QUESTION OF CONVENING A WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I would draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that a document has been distributed, entitled "Adoption of a programme of action on disarmament" (A/S-10/AC.1/32) submitted by the delegation of Norway.

Mr. HARRIMAN (United States of America): I should like to speak today about the most pressing problem that faces us as a family of nations seeking to survive in a nuclear world: the problem of the further spread of nuclear weapons across the face of the globe.

For more than a third of a century I have been concerned with this problem, as a citizen, as a public servant and as a member of the human race. Late in 1941, immediately after Pearl Harbor, I went to Washington with Prime Minister Churchill for his meeting with President Roosevelt. The Prime Minister brought with him his scientific adviser, Lord Cherwell, to urge President Roosevelt to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, the development of a nuclear weapon and to offer full British scientific co-operation. From that meeting came the Manhattan Project, under which it was possible to produce the first nuclear bomb. It should be recalled that it then seemed a desperate race against Hitler as to which side would first achieve that
awesome result. Fortunately, Hitler failed to give it the priority required and fortunately for Europe that continent was spared nuclear disaster.

Since then the United States has been working to control the devastating power of the atom. I have often been dissatisfied with the rate of progress in that task. If we had managed to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty instead of a partial ban in 1963 we should not be facing the grave problems we face today. If we had managed to include a ban on multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles in SALT I the whole world would be a safer place than it is today.

I share the impatience of representatives with the pace of our progress towards a world free from the menace of nuclear disaster, but I can say also that I have been heartened by the events of the past three weeks here in the United Nations. I believe there is a genuine dialogue going on between the nuclear and non-nuclear States. I see the participants in that dialogue seeking a consensus of views rather than the crystallization of differences. I see a real give-and-take among the delegations here, and I am particularly encouraged to see my own Government going forward to resolve the differences between us.

I am heartened by President Carter's newly strengthened pledge last week not to use nuclear weapons against States that are committed not to acquire such weapons. I am encouraged by my Government's offer of greater co-operation with States that choose not to take the nuclear-weapon path and, as a veteran of many negotiations, I take particular pleasure in the gradual elimination of more of those persistent brackets with which we entered this special session.

As a battle-scarred negotiator, I am very much aware of the difficulties and delays involved in the negotiating procedure. The last stages of any negotiations are necessarily the most troublesome. I discount the rumours that inevitably surround the fate of the major negotiations in which the United States is engaged – in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and those on the comprehensive test ban, among other things. I do not discount the difficulties in settling the few final-stage problems. We can all be encouraged by Secretary Vance's statements to the Congress this week, and may I say that I was
heartened by the reports coming from Moscow that Chairman Brezhnev had given a cordial reception to a most popular American, Mohamed Ali, and entrusted to him an important assignment, in which we wish him well.

I am confident that the problems to which I have just referred will be resolved, but I am equally confident that it does no good to press the negotiators when their goal is in sight.
I mention those negotiations because, as the two most important negotiations in which the United States is engaged in the nuclear field, they represent the commitment of the United States and the Soviet Union to meet our obligations to the non-nuclear States. Their successful completion is an essential step away from nuclear proliferation, and I suggest that progress in Geneva is at least as important as progress in New York towards the common goal that we all are pursuing.

What I ask of representatives, therefore - and I address myself particularly to those nations which have not taken up the burden of nuclear weapons - is to be understanding and co-operative in working out with us an agreed Programme of Action on nuclear disarmament that can help further removal of that terrible threat that hangs over the whole world. And as we pledge to stop and then reverse the build-up of nuclear weapons, we should strongly hope that non-nuclear-weapons States would be forthcoming in giving their commitments to the instruments that have been devised to ensure that nuclear weapons will spread no further.

Mr. VAREMO (Norway): I should like to draw the attention of this forum to the Norwegian working document entitled "Verification of a comprehensive test ban", contained in document A/S-10/AC.1/32. In that document we have elaborated on the statement made by the Norwegian Foreign Minister in the plenary meeting on 2 June on the Norwegian contributions to seismological verification of a comprehensive test-ban agreement. As my Foreign Minister emphasized on that occasion, Norway attaches particular importance to halting the further development and spread of nuclear weapons and has therefore consistently supported the quest for a complete nuclear test-ban treaty.

In that connexion the work undertaken by the Ad Hoc Group of Seismic Experts, established by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) on 22 July 1976, is of particular importance. We should like to pay a tribute to Sweden for taking the initiative in establishing that group to consider the possibilities of international co-operative measures for the detection and identification of seismic measures to facilitate the verification of a comprehensive test ban. Along with other countries, Norway has taken an active part in the work of that group.
In its final report the group recommends a network of seismological stations around the world, an international exchange of the recorded events over an international communications network, and the processing of the data at international data centres.

One of the world's largest seismological observatories, the Norwegian Seismic Array (NORSAR), is situated in Norway. That installation, which comprises more than 50 seismometers distributed over the south-eastern part of the country, has for more than five years been recording signals from earthquakes and underground nuclear explosions. NORSAR's geographical situation is particularly well suited for the registration of seismic events - a point which is also made in the report of the Group of Seismic Experts.

Experts from many countries - among others experts from the United States and the Soviet Union among them - have participated in the research activities at NORSAR which have resulted in improved methods for distinguishing the signals of explosions from those of earthquakes. That work has contributed in making verification of a comprehensive test-ban agreement technically feasible. Norway is in a position to make important contributions to a control system for such a treaty both by making NORSAR data available for a global seismological system and by assisting in scientific evaluation of the recorded data in order to verify that a test-ban treaty is adhered to.

We would very much hope that such a significant role could be assigned to NORSAR in the near future, and we would therefore reiterate our appeal to the Powers involved to intensify negotiations in order that a comprehensive test ban can be established before long.

Mr. URQUIA (El Salvador) (interpretation from Spanish): When we spoke in the general debate more than 100 representatives had already spoken. We then had an over-all view of the various and very often opposed views that we had heard. We then said, among other things, that the statements of the representatives of the two super-Powers and other States with considerable military power had been rather disappointing.
Two days earlier, on 7 June, the President of the United States, Mr. Carter, had made his Annopolis speech. His statements and those made here by the representatives of several powerful countries, militarily, economically and politically speaking, prompted us to say that some statements were being made in this chamber and read in the press that were in clear contrast with the purpose of this special session and led us to recall with discouragement the tempestuous days of the cold war. We said that, like other delegations, we thought that detente was necessary to create and maintain a climate favourable to negotiations on disarmament.

That was of the greatest concern to us was the growing tension between the two super-Powers, because it is they primarily that hold the future of the world in their hands: the supreme alternative - survival or annihilation. Paradoxically - and unfortunately, to say the least - that would come about through the use of the means and instruments which science and technology have discovered and improved to a prodigious degree and which could and should be used to build a better world, not put an end to it or bring about spectacular retrogression.

Today our impression is very different. Two days ago, on the nineteenth of this month, the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Vance, addressed the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives and made a thought-provoking statement which, in the view of the Chairman of that Committee, was one of the best statements that had been heard in Congress in the last 30 years.

Mr. Vance spoke on behalf of President Carter and said things which we should not fail to note in the General Assembly. He said that care should be taken not to use rhetoric that might be excessive and conducive to what we term the cold war.
Among other very important things he said that the United States was looking for just and peaceful solutions among and within the countries of the third world; for a balanced and mutually beneficial control of armaments; for the expansion of scientific, technological and cultural exchanges, and so forth. He stated, in brief, that his country advocates a serious programme of work for peace. He added:

"But obviously détente is a two-way street; the future course of our relations will depend also upon the choices made in Moscow. ... Our security and that of our allies continues to depend on our capacity to meet any military threat we face. Neither we nor the Soviets should entertain the notion that military supremacy can be attained. But we must and will maintain a strong defense that serves as a credible deterrent to any potential adversary."

The statement of the Secretary of State and his replies to the questions put to him constitute the formulation of a serious, consistent and energetic policy, although a moderate one, which can in no way be taken as a sign of weakness or appeasement.

It is a confirmation of what was said by the President of the United States in his statement of 4 October 1977 at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly. He said:

"... I hereby solemnly declare, on behalf of the United States, that we will not use nuclear weapons except in self-defence; that is, in circumstances of an actual nuclear or conventional attack on the United States, our territories or armed forces, or such an attack on our allies." (A/32/PV.18, p. 16-20)

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, used similar language in his statement at this session on 26 May 1978. He said:
'From the rostrum of the United Nations special session our country declares that the Soviet Union will never use nuclear weapons against those States which renounce the production and acquisition of such weapons and do not have them on their territories." (A/S-10/FV.5, p. 28-30)

We must urge here and in other regional and international bodies that the two major Powers must fulfil their promises and give to the world definitive and reassuring proof that there will be no more world wars and no more unjust conflicts, that nuclear energy will be used only for peaceful purposes and that conventional weapons will be used only for self-defence and for internal or external security. To that end, as we said in our statement of 9 June, those weapons must be reduced to reasonable and appropriate levels.

Let me add that we also found the statement we have just heard by the representative of the United States, Mr. V. Averell Harriman, to be very encouraging.

I should like to repeat to the Ad hoc Committee that we are ready to vote for any draft declaration or draft resolutions under consideration at this special session which we regard as acceptable.

Our work will be completed in one week, and we are now awaiting the revised, and in some cases agreed, drafts that will be submitted to us by the working groups. The United States, the Soviet Union and other countries have put forward valuable proposals which will undoubtedly have been taken into account by the working groups.

While we are not in favour of the proliferation of agencies or organs within the United Nations, we view with sympathy the initiatives of France, the Netherlands and Uruguay, as well as Austria and other countries, concerning the establishment of certain bodies to deal with disarmament problems.
We wish to underline the need for two different working bodies: one for nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and another for conventional weapons, both linked to the General Assembly.

Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany have put forward proposals on seismological verification and on an international seminar on the verification of chemical weapons; these seem to us to be very useful suggestions which could be adopted.

Similarly, we regard with considerable interest France's proposal for the establishment of a special disarmament fund for development; Mexico's proposal on the opening of a special provisional account within the United Nations Development Programme; and Nigeria's proposal for the training of high-level technical specialists on disarmament, particularly in the developing countries.

Of course, we support the proposal of Japan that 6 August of every year should be declared World Disarmament Day, because it was on 6 August 1945 - a day of bitter memory - that the atom bomb was used for the first time.

Mr. LAIGLESTIA GONZALEZ (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish):
We have had occasion to look at the draft reports which have been drawn up by Working Groups A and B, and the delegation of Spain wishes to thank the Chairmen of those Groups, Ambassadors Templeton and Jaroszcz, as well as the co-ordinators of the Drafting Groups, for their efforts in preparing drafts of the introduction, declaration, programme of action and the section on machinery which, when we have completed our work, will form the final document of this tenth special session of the General Assembly.

Unfortunately, we see that at the present moment there is no consensus on a substantial number of points, and that much further negotiation and informal discussion will be needed if we are to achieve any positive result.
The delegation of Spain wishes to co-operate in these efforts, and accordingly intends, in collaboration with the representatives of other countries, to submit a text which would make it possible to resolve the difficulties that remain with respect to some aspects of our work.

None the less, Mr. Chairman, we do not wish to make your work more difficult. Therefore, if we are permitted to submit any amendment, we would do so after consulting the different groups as to whether they are acceptable.

Therefore, I should like to ask the Chairman whether he would consider it appropriate for us to take such action over the next few days, and what would be a reasonable time-limit for that purpose.
The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): In reply to the representative of Spain, I wish to say that at the present moment, as all delegations are aware, intensive consultations are taking place among various delegations or groups of delegations, with a view to arriving at an agreed text on certain points that still remain unsettled.

In accordance with the agreed programme of work that we have kept to so far, the working groups will complete their work today, and will have tomorrow to consider and approve the draft reports that they will submit to the Ad Hoc Committee. Then on Friday morning this Committee will officially receive the draft reports and begin to examine them.

If, therefore, the representative of Spain has any text to propose, I would suggest — since strictly speaking it is perhaps already too late to submit amendments in the working groups — that he should continue his consultations, as he said, with a view to obtaining approval of or a consensus on the text referred to, from the various groups.

I am sure that if, when the final text is discussed in the Ad Hoc Committee, the representative of Spain has a text to propose, there will be no difficulty in including it in the draft final document.

Mr. IAIIGLESIA GONZALEZ (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Chairman. When the time comes, if we manage to get a text which meets the conditions I have described, we shall be pleased to submit it to the Ad Hoc Committee in an effort to solve the existing problems concerning some aspects of the documents that have been drawn up by the working group.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to announce that Malaysia has joined the sponsors of the draft in document A/S-10/AC.1/L.1.

As I have just said, today Working Groups A and B will complete their work, and tomorrow they will consider the final text of the draft reports they are to submit to the Ad Hoc Committee for consideration. Consequently, this Committee’s next meeting will be on the morning of Friday, 23 June, to receive the final draft reports from Working Groups A and B and begin their consideration.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.