



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOATEN (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

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Mr. GARBA (Niger) (interpretation from French): Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Niger, I should like to convey to you my congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My congratulations go also to the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, who have the task of assisting you in the conduct of our proceedings.

I am pleased to be able to speak in this important Committee and to participate in its work. Indeed, its agenda cannot possibly escape the notice of representatives of third world countries such as mine. The number and nature of the items on our agenda stem from the clear-cut will of the international community to find appropriate remedies for the greatest evils of our time - namely, the escalation of violence and the frenzied arms race - which the Head of the Foreign Ministry of Niger denounced, in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, as the greatest scandal of our day. Indeed, at a time when human societies are displaying tolerance and the will to open a window on the world, it is paradoxical to note the extent to which men today are afraid of one another. This, without any doubt, is a consequence of the climate of collective insecurity in which we exist, and of the hypothetical nature of mankind's future.

Accordingly, the new Niger can only be gratified at any action undertaken to establish a true climate of peace and security. But, in the view of our delegation, this noble goal can only be attained if States, great and small, agree to the non-use of force in international relations. Niger, for its part, attempting wherever it can to bring about conciliation, has demonstrated the value it attaches to the peaceful settlement of disputes among States. Indeed, we believe that the establishment of a climate of confidence and mutual esteem in international relations will do something, however little, to slow down the arms race and will consequently promote the denuclearization of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

(Mr. Garba, Niger)

The maintenance of those areas as nuclear-free zones has been the subject of legitimate concern on the part of all peace-loving peoples, particularly the Arab and African peoples, which have to face zionist aggression and the barbarous, reactionary apartheid régime. Indeed, who better than these very peoples, involved as they are in a ruthless struggle against poverty, disease and ignorance, can appreciate the benefits of peace and stability in the world?

Mr. UPADHYAY (Nepal): Mr. Chairman, in deference to your wishes, I shall not voice any congratulatory phrases, but allow me to offer you my delegation's sincere co-operation.

"The level of nuclear armaments could grow by tens of thousands and the same situation could well occur with advanced conventional weapons. The temptation to use these weapons, or fear that someone else might do it first, would be almost irresistible. The ever-growing trade in conventional arms subverts international commerce from a force for peace to a caterer for war." (A/32/PV.18, p. 3)

That observation made by the President of the United States of America in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on 4 October 1977 very accurately sums up the present state of the world. We come to the General Assembly this year again to review the state of disarmament efforts. What shall we call it: disappointing or hopeful?

If one looks into the statements of the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union one is bound to see a silver lining on the dark horizon. President Carter, in his inaugural address, called for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. He reiterated his stand in his address to the General Assembly and expressed the willingness of the United States Government to reduce nuclear weapons by 10, 20 or even 50 per cent. The leader of the Soviet Union, Mr. Brezhnev, declared his Government's policy as "not a course towards superiority in armaments, but a course towards reducing them, towards lessening military confrontation ...". There have been similar statements made by many other leaders whose arsenals are full of weapons of mass destruction. While the world is clamouring for total and complete disarmament, the basis of confidence and the foundation of a structure for general and complete disarmament rests on the political will of those who can substantially contribute to the de-escalation of the arms race. Although these statements carry certain weighty messages, we cannot forget that in real terms we are facing a paradoxical situation.

We are thankful that we are able to find solace in the good fortune of mankind which has survived another year of stalemate in arms control negotiation. While the negotiations are still in stalemate the expenses incurred in the production of new categories of destructive weapons have gone on

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

unabated and the new estimate of global military expenditure is over \$350 billion a year. The arms expenditure has increased all over the world, but, unfortunately, the greatest increases in arms spending have been registered "in areas of the world where the arms race was as yet relatively unknown" (CCD/PV.728, p. 11), as stated in the Secretary-General's message to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

We have before us 17 items on disarmament. This is a comprehensive list, out of which seven deal with nuclear disarmament. Obviously, the General Assembly has attached the greatest importance to the question of how to control further proliferation of nuclear weapons and how to curb the production of nuclear weapons. There is a sense of urgency in the statements made during the General Assembly by various Heads of State and Government as well as heads of delegations. Speakers one after another have expressed their concern at the pace of armament and especially at the increasing danger of nuclear miscalculation. President Carter put it very prudently when he said:

"It is a truism that nuclear weapons are a powerful deterrent. They are a deterrent because they threaten. They could be used for terrorism or blackmail as well as for war. But they threaten ... every nation - combatant and non-combatant alike. That is why all of us must be concerned." (A/32/PV.18, p. 7)

All the Members of the United Nations feel that the priority goal of any disarmament efforts should begin with a ban on all nuclear-weapon testing. The General Assembly has annually adopted resolutions urging all to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test-ban agreement. During the last session, the United Nations General Assembly urged the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament to continue to give the highest priority to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test-ban agreement, and the report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament is before us. The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament put the question of nuclear disarmament as a priority. In its usual manner, it held serious deliberations, and a number of proposals were made. We have been quite familiar with the principal obstacles that have been referred to by various delegations as impeding the

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

progress in negotiation and agreement. The issue of verification, the question of participation of all nuclear-weapon Powers in the treaty and the problem of how to conduct peaceful nuclear explosions have been raised as formidable obstacles.

Cessation of the arms race largely depends on curbing the nuclear arsenal, and this heavily depends upon the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests. Stopping nuclear-weapon tests will work as a catalyst for general and complete disarmament. The time for such an action has come. It is a matter of some satisfaction that the two major nuclear Powers agreed to limit the scope of nuclear-weapon tests. This provides us with an opportunity to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My delegation wishes to commend the delegation of Sweden for its ingenious effort to produce the text of a draft treaty, which has taken into account the so-called formidable obstacles and tries to produce a sound basis upon which the whole structure of a comprehensive test-ban treaty could be built. The very existence of the nuclear arsenal is threatening to mankind, its further proliferation enhances the danger of miscalculation. The General Assembly has to give further momentum to the negotiations in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament as well as in other forums.

While there is a general realization by all of the nuclear threat, while no one has expressed himself in favour of unabated growth in the nuclear arsenal on any pretext, while the awareness of the ghastliness of a nuclear war and its consequences are shared by all, it would be very unrealistic to believe that this awareness or realization is sufficient to halt the temptation of the threshold Powers to test nuclear devices. While everyone has condemned the use of nuclear weapons, there is no dearth of supporters of so-called peaceful nuclear explosives. Whether or not one believes in the solemn declaration of those who intend to test nuclear devices for peaceful purposes, no one can deny that in a power-hungry world nuclear reactors are a positive answer to a crisis situation.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

My delegation has always expressed the view that as long as convincing assurances cannot be given to the countries not possessing nuclear technology by those possessing it that the latter are ready to share the technology with them, to be used for peaceful purposes, the threshold nations will have reasonable doubts as to the genuineness of the proclamations made by members of the nuclear club. Coming as we do from a country which has adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, my delegation is aware of the danger of nuclear proliferation. We are ardently in favour of halting proliferation. However, we are convinced that unless the problem of peaceful nuclear explosions is solved satisfactorily the temptation to go nuclear cannot be averted.

While we have not wavered from our total adherence to the non-proliferation Treaty and still call for universal adherence to it, we maintain, however, that the issue of non-proliferation should be viewed in a broader perspective. Proliferation is dangerous. The greater the number of possessors of such catastrophic weapons, the greater the risk of pilferage and miscalculation, the greater the risk of the outbreak of a nuclear war. Similarly, the greater the accumulation of new devices and the stockpiling of the weapons, the more this adds to the insecurity of the world. Proliferation is bad and dangerous, whether it is vertical or horizontal; they are parts of the same problem.

Similarly, one of the important elements that complicates the problem is that of the provision by the nuclear States of adequate security guarantees to the non-nuclear States. We have expressed in the past and we wish to reiterate our stand that in order to strengthen the non-proliferation Treaty régime it is essential that non-nuclear-weapon States be helped to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy without discrimination and that the nuclear-weapon Powers demonstrate their desire to curb nuclear armament by taking concrete steps. It would be hard to convince the non-nuclear-weapon States that they could be injudicious in the use of nuclear arsenals while the present members of the nuclear club would retain the monopoly of wisdom.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Another important land-mark in the efforts to curb nuclear armament and create conditions of trust is the declaration by the nuclear Powers on the non-use of nuclear weapons in the event of war. My delegation has repeatedly appealed to the nuclear Powers to issue a solemn declaration that they will not be the first to use the nuclear weapon. President Carter's solemn declaration in the United Nations General Assembly inspires great hopes. We express our appreciation to the President of the United States of America and look forward hopefully to similar declarations by other nuclear Powers.

In August 1945 the world witnessed the greatest act of annihilation in human history; in the twinkling of an eye, 105,000 people died, leaving behind another 94,000 to undergo the agonies of survival. In the last 32 years, since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, not a single person has lost his life through the use of a nuclear weapon. But in the same period 30 million to 50 million people have died in 115 wars and battles by means of conventional weapons.

Usually a person will choose misery over death. To survive is the prime instinct and one can adjust to hardship of various types and bear misery with hope for better days to come. So it is but natural that when we think in terms of the collective human society we accord greatest priority to nuclear disarmament. But can we leave in abeyance all other disarmament problems until nuclear disarmament is achieved? Can we ignore the immensity of the misuse of resources due to the tendency to acquire armaments? Can we ignore the misery of millions who are still the victims of neglect?

Conventional forces absorb more than 80 per cent of world military expenditure. While illiteracy, hunger and disease are still plaguing the majority of the world population and of nations it is shocking to see the transfer of resources that could be used to alleviate the condition of the people to the acquisition of means of destroying the people. It is particularly sad to see that the spectre of insecurity haunts the developing countries no less than the developed ones. The vicious circle seems to grow bigger and bigger.

"... as nations' fears have multiplied their arms and nations' arms have multiplied their fears".

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

Obviously, the craze to acquire more and more arms is the product of fear of other Powers. The small Power looks with suspicion at the middle Power, the middle Power in turn looks with suspicion at big Powers, creating ongoing vicious circles.

The world is riddled with problems of an urgent nature that need tangible solution on the basis of global co-operation. Regional understanding and co-operation alone can pave the way for the promotion of global co-operation. The acquisition of arms vitiates the atmosphere of understanding and increases distrust. So the time for stock-taking has come. The sense of insecurity of nations in the developing world is providing a major source of income for the industrialized nations. The gap between the rich and the poor is not only being maintained by transfer of arms from developed to developing nations but also making the developing countries more and more dependent as consumers of the military hardware junk of the developed countries. We must ask ourselves, has the acquisition of weapons, most of them outmoded by the standards of big Powers, contributed to the security of a country or a region or has it whetted the appetite for further acquisition as well as sophistication?

We cannot ignore a problem that is slowly killing mankind and inching the world towards disaster because that increasing insecurity not only makes a nuclear war itself a possibility but also increases the chance of wide conflicts with powerful modern conventional weapons and makes a large-scale war a probability.

I do not wish to cite data. Every one of us is aware of the callous misuse for the acquisition of military hardware of funds which could be transferred to satisfy the basic needs of the poorer half of the world. While the chronic hunger and malnutrition of millions of children are threatening their normal growth and 1,200 million people are without reasonable access to a safe drinking water supply, the resources of mankind are being wasted wantonly. The World Food Conference proclaimed the goals and declared:

(Mr. Uradhyay, Nepal)

"All Governments should accept the goal that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for the next day's bread, and that no human being's future and capacity will be stunted by malnutrition."

It is incumbent upon us to do everything possible to achieve that goal. In the remaining six years of the decade concrete measures should be taken by the international community to transfer resources from arms trade to war on hunger.

Why is there such a paradox? Why have champions of goodwill become prophets of gloom and death? Perhaps the time has come to ask this question as well. Why is the arms trade so flourishing? Why is there, on average, more than one skirmish every day? What are the causes of so many wars? A study of causes of wars in the 32 years since the formation of the United Nations might provide an answer to the problem of the flourishing arms trade.

(Mr. Upadhyay, Nepal)

I believe that the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament will definitely prove a catalyst for the convening of a world disarmament conference if it addresses itself not only to the question of the nuclear race, but also the problem of every-day skirmishes.

We are now preparing for the special session on disarmament next year. Against the background of a plethora of resolutions passed and declarations made by the United Nations General Assembly during the last 32 years, there is little room for further proliferation of resolutions. What is needed is action, howsoever modest, so that a start can be made to assure the international community about the possibility of further action in the field of disarmament. It is with this view in mind that we always welcomed such moves during the past when we lent our support to various treaties like the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the partial test-ban Treaty, the Treaty prohibiting the emplacement of nuclear weapons on the sea-bed and ocean floor, and others.

Similarly we welcomed SALT I and we welcome any news that assures us that SALT II negotiations will be successful. The reason for this is quite obvious. While the international community is looking forward to general and complete disarmament, we are convinced that the effort to curb armament by those who have the largest stockpile and means of further sophistication of deadly weapons can really create an atmosphere of trust in the field of disarmament. Although we welcome bilateral or trilateral moves in the direction of disarmament, we think, however, that these efforts should increasingly be made through the United Nations forum. Disarmament cannot be viewed only as the concern of those who have the greatest capacity for destruction; it is a concern of all, and thus all Members of the United Nations must be involved in the process. The logical course would be for those who have the real means of destruction to take the initiative, but all others should have a role to play. Otherwise, what significance can a resolution or declaration have if those who are asked to adhere to such resolutions and declarations have no means to subscribe to them in practice? We suggest, therefore, that the big Powers should clearly declare their intent to adhere to United Nations resolutions and declarations through a process of multilateral negotiations with the participation of all Members of the United Nations.

(Mr. Unadhyay, Nepal)

We further suggest that in order to make the special session on disarmament a success, and with a view to being able to create such a forum, all matters related to disarmament must be brought into sharper focus. Let this session of the General Assembly pronounce itself on the desirability of agreeing on a freeze on the further production and sophistication of weapons of destruction, whether nuclear or conventional, and to enhance the role of the United Nations in peace-keeping operations.

We are discussing the various disarmament items together. The reason is quite obvious. Their interrelation is so strong and the problems of disarmament are so intertwined that it would be difficult to accord priority to one problem without the risk of letting others grow into problems of formidable proportions.

General and complete disarmament is the goal of the United Nations. Without the achievement of this goal, the world remains exposed to the danger of the scourge of another war. One cannot just count the trees and forget the forest.

My delegation reserves the right to intervene again in the general debate and try to make its modest contribution, but at this particular stage of the debate we would like to invite the delegations of big Powers to put positive proposals before the General Assembly. We think this session, meeting a few months before the special session on disarmament, can play a crucial role in furthering constructive negotiation so that the goal of general and complete disarmament can be achieved.

The CHAIRMAN: The list of speakers for this meeting is exhausted. Having no more speakers for this morning's meeting and none for the afternoon meeting, we are forced, without utilizing the full time available to the Committee, to adjourn this meeting and to cancel the afternoon meeting. We do not so far have any speakers for tomorrow morning.

In order to avoid unnecessary cancellations, I should like once again to urge representatives to inscribe their names on the list of speakers so that we may be able to conclude our task on time.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.