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Chairman: Mr. Otto R. BORCH (Denmark).

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(continued)

Economic and social consequences of the armaments race and its extremely harmful effects on world peace and security

World Disarmament Conference: report of the Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference (A/8990 and Add.1, A/9033, A/9041, A/9228)

General and complete disarmament: report of the Conference and of the Committee on Disarmament (A/9039, A/9141, A/9293, A/C.1/L.650)

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(a) Report of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (A/9141);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General (A/9208)

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 2935 (XXVII) concerning the signature and ratification of Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco): report of the Secretary-General (A/9137, A/9209)

Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace: report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Indian Ocean (A/9029)

1. Mr. FRAZÃO (Brazil): Last week, as the First Committee started its debate on disarmament, developments in the Middle East dramatically reminded us of the seriousness of the tasks of the United Nations and the urgency of our Organization's fulfilling its responsibilities. These developments brought to our minds once again the fact, the political and diplomatic fact which I think is indisputable, that this forum still stands out as the only one in which conflicts and disputes may find solutions acceptable to the international community as a whole.

2. Indeed, despite the much touted new dialogue between the super-Powers, despite movements towards relaxation of tensions and towards détente, an international crisis was allowed to escalate to the point of inducing speculation as to impending threats of nuclear confrontation. Although the worst was avoided—and let us hope that it has been avoided, and not just postponed—it was of no comfort, to say the least, to realize that for almost two days the fate of mankind actually hung in the balance, waiting for more or less rational decisions by the super-Powers. Ironically enough, the danger of escalation came about as the super-Powers quarrelled over their interpretation on how to exercise the joint or unilateral special responsibilities they claim to have, in view of their nuclear arsenals and of their capability to blow up the world if and when they believe there is no other way to preserve the so-called strategic balance.

3. Once again we were confronted with the certainty that international crises have their own inner dynamics, and may, indeed, get out of hand. In my view, the conclusion is clear: notwithstanding explicit or tacit laudable understandings between the powerful and the super-powerful of our era, international security cannot indefinitely rest on the restraint, political will or rationality of crisis managers, but should be based on more concrete arrangements and be less dependent on imponderables.

4. If, for the over-all purposes of the political and security Committee of the General Assembly, a lesson is to be drawn from the on-going crisis, it is that, more than ever, our debates, our negotiations and our collective efforts should be aimed at the search for responsive and reliable mechanisms of collective security, capable of settling crises on the equitable terms prescribed in the Charter of the United Nations.

5. I wonder whether by saying this and by advancing such ideas, and simply by referring to the Charter, I am not day-dreaming or science-fictioning. The gap between the purposes and principles of our institutional document and present realities is so wide as to engulf all hope as well as the trust we place in the role of this Organization. But it is our duty to overcome disillusion, frustrations and a certain sentiment of uselessness that, if not put aside, could even asphyxiate us. For if we cannot at this stage utilize the Organization as a constructive element to definitely ingrain peace and security in the world conscience, at least let us strive to utilize it to make war less and less a political probability. Peace, security, peace-keeping both in the political and economic fields negotiation, the creation of a normative framework within which and according to which the play of international politics is based on equity, on the equality of States, and bound to afford prosperity for nations and dignity for man—those, I think, are still our aims. Or are they not?

6. On the assumption that the attainment of these aims is the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, I shall say that paramount among our worries should be the negotiations on the multiple aspects of disarmament.

7. There is little doubt that efforts during the past 12 months have not yielded encouraging results in this field. Many of the representatives who have taken the floor in this debate voiced their disappointment, indeed their deep concern, with the failure, for which the nuclear-weapon States are mainly responsible, to transfer apparent progress in the political sphere to the realm of disarmament. This apprehension is perfectly justifiable on grounds both of the ominous threat posed by the continuing arms race and of the growing belief that those political gains, namely the seeming relaxation of world tensions, may prove illusory and deceptive, if not buttressed by concrete advances in the field of disarmament.

8. The bare facts of the arms race, particularly in the nuclear field, have become more apparent since the last session of the General Assembly. It is hardly news that the total world military expenditure has reached the annual sum of about 200,000 million dollars. Moreover, almost 84 per cent of the total expenditure on armaments is made by countries belonging to the two most important military pacts, and 80 per cent of the gross total is attributable to the six best armed countries of the world.

9. There are, therefore, no grounds for complacency. Not only are the nuclear armaments piling up, but their sophistication is fast increasing. The capability for reciprocal overkill continues to be the bedrock, the foundation of the relationship between the most powerful countries.

10. Despite all this, despite the pressure of world conscience, there where it can be ascertained and make itself

felt, multilateral disarmament negotiations are at a standstill, while bilateral negotiations, valuable as they are, remain confined to the area of arms control and arms limitation. It would be unwise and unfair to ascribe responsibility for this regrettable situation to a lack of concern on the part of the international community as a whole. This responsibility rests primarily on those who spend the most on armaments and especially on nuclear weapons.

11. Needless to say, no one at this stage of the nuclear era has any great hopes of achieving disarmament in one stroke or independently from the establishment of a climate of international confidence and respect for the rights of States, whatever their power. The United Nations is not a proper place to indulge in Utopian dreams. On the contrary, within our Organization it is now almost a political truism that security and disarmament go together, that it is hard to conceive significant progress in one field without similar and concurrent advances in the other. In the end, international politics are but a single arena. Problems receive different labels merely for the sake of convenience and to facilitate eventual progress in different negotiating fronts which, in the last instance, are interrelated.

12. Actually, disarmament cannot be achieved in a political void. If we are ever to achieve general and complete disarmament, this will require a concurrent revamping of the international system as a whole, including a settlement of outstanding issues, the closing of the gap between developed and developing countries, and the patient construction of a system of collective economic security as the foundation for the establishment of equitable relationships at the inter-State level.

13. Since these general goals seem still far from attainment, it has been argued that, as a second-best alternative, disarmament should be pragmatically put aside in favour of more realistic objectives, such as arms control or arms limitation. In the field of armaments, limitation is not an end in itself, but only a first step on the road towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

14. In terms of security and stability, all pragmatic considerations lateral to the framework of general and complete disarmament imply the admission of a system of international relations based solely on the existence of power, power to destroy and power to impose solutions. Thus, in terms of security, and even stability, the concept of limitation of the armaments through which power is exercised should, indeed, be considered not in relation to the highest level of armaments ever reached but, rather, in comparison with the gradual accomplishment of the objectives of general and complete disarmament. Arms control and arms limitation are, therefore, acceptable as a lesser evil, but they cannot be accepted as a solution to the structural problems inherent in the present international system, of which the arms race and in particular the nuclear arms race are both a cause and a symptom.

15. The overcoming of the disarmament dilemma will require the setting up of new institutional arrangements at the international level, whereby security would be fostered not by competing nuclear arsenals, but by the gradual

assertion of a state of confidence and respect for the sovereign rights of all States. In that process, partial measures of arms control and arms limitation will have a place, and may temporarily play a role, as long as they are intended to broaden the areas of understanding and facilitate further progress, and as long as they are not of a discriminatory nature. Otherwise, a condition akin to a stable nuclear balance would be uncritically identified with a condition of security. Depending largely on the orderly maintenance of the *status quo*, international stability can in no way be treated in the same conceptual framework as international security, which is by no means antithetical to change and, on the contrary, presupposes, above all, common action based on shared political and economic aims and aspirations.

16. When compared to conditions prevailing during the cold war period, détente looms large, even though it is but a step forward in the quest for stability, and not to be confused with security. As the Minister for External Relations of Brazil put it in his speech during the general debate in the plenary: “the success of détente will be contingent on our capacity to expand it so that its long-term aims are not lost sight of and so that it does not become an instrument . . .”—I repeat, [that détente] “does not become an instrument for the imposition of hegemonic arrangements” [2124th plenary meeting, para. 11]. However limited, however, ambiguous, however contradictory, the present relaxation of international tensions may create the opportunity for further relaxation and for strengthening détente itself and, in time, for proceeding beyond it to more satisfying international arrangements.

17. It has been said with great accuracy and elegance—indeed, great elegance—that at the level of the super-Powers, “each increment of power does not necessarily represent an increment of political strength”. But if this new law of diminishing returns of power is essentially correct, as I believe it to be, it is also quite clear that the nuclear arms race has reached a stage in which its underlying assumptions must be re-examined and new possibilities for negotiation should be explored.

18. Politically speaking, the strategic arms limitation talks are without doubt a welcome development, in so far as they foreshadow the lessening of contention and rivalry between the parties thereto. Our hope now is that a spirit similar to the one that made the talks possible will be present in the field of disarmament proper; that co-chairmanship will be succeeded not by co-management but by more flexible international security.

19. It is my conviction and my contention that, although the adoption of concrete measures of disarmament will benefit all States, they will be of particular interest to the developing countries, as they will release valuable resources and, in some instances, advanced technological capabilities which may be productively invested in the economic development of the poorer segment of mankind. The channelling for development purposes of savings deriving from disarmament could certainly contribute in an important manner to the acceleration of the economic development of the developing countries, and, thus, to an indispensable reinforcement of international security.

20. In this connexion, my delegation will, in due time, make its views known on the proposal of the delegation of the Soviet Union¹ on the reduction of military budgets the rationale of which has long been the object of initiatives taken by my country in this and in other forums.

21. I shall now turn to item 32 which deals with the World Disarmament Conference. The status of the work, or, if you prefer, the status of the non-work, of the Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, and of the informal consultations that have been held among its members, has been described in the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/9228 and was ably, accurately and succinctly expressed in the statement delivered at the 1934th meeting by the representative of Iran. I would like to take this opportunity to convey through you, Mr. Chairman, to our dear colleague Mr. Hoveyda the deep appreciation of the delegation of Brazil for the excellent and untiring work he performed while directing those informal consultations. Mr. Hoveyda displayed all the skills required of a professional diplomat, the first of which, as we, his professional colleagues, are so fully aware, is the belief in quiet diplomacy, discretion and negotiation, always necessary in bridging differences among sovereign States.

22. As members of the First Committee will certainly recall, my delegation participated very actively in the negotiations leading to the adoption of resolution 2930 (XXVII), which Brazil sponsored. Our position at that time was substantially outlined in a working paper, document A/C.1/L.618 of 1 November 1972, which we circulated as a concrete contribution to the negotiations then in progress.

23. With regard to the manifold problems of a political nature posed by the preparatory stage of the Conference and by the holding of the Conference itself, the position of the delegation of Brazil remains basically the same as last year. When I addressed the First Committee during the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly [1882nd meeting], I stressed that the proposed World Disarmament Conference should be seen in conjunction with the need to accommodate the interests of the nuclear-weapon States and of the medium and small Powers which are, by definition, non-nuclear-weapon States. This was and remains a contention of the Brazilian delegation. We are persuaded that the Conference should be convened only in a context of general accommodation of interests and of relaxation of international tensions. Otherwise, what could be a most important and constructive initiative by the international community would serve merely as a political platform for one country or another, or for a given group of countries.

24. We also believe that the proposed conference should serve no purpose other than those compatible with the strengthening of international security, absolute priority being given to nuclear disarmament. Specifically, the Conference should be ready to set general guidelines for future negotiations on disarmament and related fields, to outline a programme for those negotiations, and to select appropriate international machinery for them.

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-eighth Session, Annexes, agenda item 102, document A/9191.*

25. In addition, three conditions must be met if the success of the Conference is to be reasonably assured: first, careful political and technical preparation should precede the Conference; secondly, the participation of all the nuclear Powers must be obtained; and, thirdly, the Conference must be held under the sponsorship of the United Nations General Assembly, so that no doubt may remain as to its legal and its political status.

26. As to resolution 2930 (XXVII) itself, the delegation of Brazil believes that its core may be found in paragraphs 1 and 2, while its procedural implications are taken care of in paragraph 3. My delegation was led to believe that the reference to "adequate political and geographical representation" in paragraph 3 of that resolution would not, at the time of its implementation, depart from the accepted principle of geographical distribution set forth in the Charter. The introduction of a new political element, namely, political representation, distorted the composition of the Committee and was a hindrance to its establishment. I noticed that recently, in the Security Council, although in a different context, the subject of political representation was again raised, with arguments which for us are still very eccentric. My delegation has always considered that the criterion of geographical distribution is the most adequate to enable representation in United Nations bodies to reflect the whole spectrum of the international community, since that criterion does not exclude any delegation or group of delegations. I trust that this principle will continue to be applied in its entirety, as set forth in the Charter. New elements, of an allegedly political nature, should not be allowed to distort the practices of the Organization, which have so far proved quite satisfactory.

27. In this context, let me add that Brazil continues to support fully the provisions of the letter dated 2 February 1973 [A/9041], addressed by the Chairman of the group of Latin American States to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

28. Honouring its tradition of active involvement in disarmament questions, the delegation of Brazil has associated itself since the beginning of the current year with those endeavouring to create conditions for the implementation of resolution 2930 (XXVII). My delegation is thus certainly aware of the obstacles that still lie in the path of convening a World Disarmament Conference.

29. But if there are ample reasons for the intensification of the bilateral negotiations on arms control, there are certainly even better reasons to promote the acceleration of the multilateral negotiations on disarmament. I need not emphasize the shortcomings of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament nor the poor results it has up to now brought forth. During the general debate, the Minister for External Relations of Brazil has already remarked that the work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has not been attuned to international trends, that the relations between the Conference and the General Assembly remain ambiguous and that the Conference is gradually transforming itself into a mere advisory body.

30. Thus our main task now is to redress past failures and to convert what is reasonable and desirable into a new reality. To accomplish this, the international community

would be well-advised to concentrate its attention on the ways and means of refashioning and reactivating the existing machinery for negotiations on disarmament. Having in mind the preparation for the World Disarmament Conference, and in order to ensure that the Conference's preparatory mechanism responds effectively to felt needs, we propose that, as a first step in that direction, the General Assembly consider the desirability of reconvening the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a preparatory body for the World Disarmament Conference.

31. The reconvening of the Commission would obviate one of the most difficult problems in the preparatory stage of the World Disarmament Conference, namely, the question of the representation of all nuclear-weapon States. Being a plenary organ, to which all Member States belong *ex officio*, the Commission could provide conditions and the framework for the participation of all nuclear-weapon States in the preparatory stage of the Conference and, later, in the Conference itself.

32. It could be argued that the Commission, due to its large membership, would not be a propitious forum for actual concrete negotiations. But this alleged shortcoming could, however, be avoided through a number of devices, including the creation of as many *ad hoc* sub-commissions as necessary, with a membership suited to their specific tasks. These sub-commissions could be specifically entrusted with the brunt of the preparatory work. Such a procedure would give the Commission all the political flexibility it needs in order to act as a catalytic body, while leaving to the *ad hoc* sub-commissions the task of settling the more technical issues and effectively laying the groundwork for the Conference. Besides solving the moot question of the representation of the nuclear-weapon and other Powers in the present Special Committee, a reconvened Disarmament Commission would also accelerate the preparatory work for the World Disarmament Conference and alleviate the workload of the First Committee for the next session of the General Assembly.

33. Given an adequate period of time, and provided that there is the indispensable political will to negotiate, in particular on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, the Commission could indeed, better than any other existing body, set the stage for a successful World Disarmament Conference, one that could really live up to the expectations that its convening will surely arouse.

34. My delegation intends to take the floor again, later in the debate, to elaborate on some specific topics left open in my intervention.

35. It is surely our hope that our work this year will not finish with an exercise in drafting routine resolutions but will instead contribute, with new and imaginative approaches, to the settlement of the real questions posed by the continuing arms race. We Brazilians remain convinced that, now more than ever, the best way for the General Assembly to affirm its leadership in the field of disarmament would be to lay down specific guidelines for the various negotiations which should be forthcoming next year, in the many international forums dealing with disarmament and related issues.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.