

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

**1441st
PLENARY MEETING**

*Thursday, 13 October 1966,
at 3 p.m.*

NEW YORK

49. Mr. PICCIONI (Italy)^{5/} (translated from French):^{6/} In the final phase of this debate, in which some sixty-six speakers have preceded me, it is now possible to make a preliminary appraisal of what has been said so far. In substance, we have heard two opposing points of view: that of the pessimists and that of the optimists. The former put the emphasis on a long list of undeniably negative facts, such as the dangerous intensification of the conflict in Viet-Nam, the failure of efforts to give the United Nations a completely universal character, the absence of new agreements on disarmament and the lack of agreement on certain fundamental problems facing the Organization, such as the functioning of peace-keeping operations and the elimination of the final deficit. These facts lead the pessimists to gloomy forecasts of future developments, both in regard to the possibilities of preserving peace and, in particular, in regard to the future of the United Nations. The optimists, on the other hand, are inclined to think that settlement of the differences I have mentioned is not far off; they believe that, despite the absence of formal agreement, the Geneva negotiations on disarmament have narrowed the gap between certain points of view, thus making possible the conclusion of an agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the near future; they also see prospects for the conclusion of a treaty on the peaceful uses of outer space; they place great hopes in the declarations of goodwill uttered by the parties concerned and count on the ultimate victory of common sense.

50. Before these two diametrically opposed points of view, experience and prudence counsel that we choose a middle course. Admittedly, it is true that the international situation as a whole is overcast; but some broad rays of light shine through. In recent months, for example, the sanguinary conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia has been brought to an end.

51. At the same time, Europe has seen a remarkable intensification of contacts between the Western and Eastern European Powers. These contacts, as witnessed, among other things, by President Johnson's most recent statements, have led to a certain rapprochement which gives promise of encouraging developments. How can one be entirely pessimistic in the light of these events?

52. In order that I also may contribute to the speedy conclusion of the general debate, I do not intend to speak at length on all the questions on our agenda and I propose to confine myself to some comments on a small number of particularly important matters, reserving my remarks on other items for the Committees. I shall start with the Viet-Nam conflict, which is not in fact on the Assembly's agenda, but which has been rightly mentioned by all those who have preceded me.

53. I should like to emphasize that all Italy fervently wants the Viet-Nam conflict to end and that the Government of my country, within the limits of its possibilities, intends to continue doing its best to help bring that about. On this point the views of all sectors of public opinion in Italy coincide. This state of mind is shown by the fact that the Rome Parliament has debated the problem of Viet-Nam perhaps more often than any other parliament in the world. Moreover, I cannot but note that all the speakers who have preceded me at this rostrum have, without exception, also spoken in favour of the cessation of the war in Viet-Nam. This encouraging unanimity could, at first sight, suggest that it will not be difficult to restore peace. On reflection, unfortunately, things look different.

54. In the first place, many of those who want an end to the conflict explicitly or tacitly add a condition: the victory of one side over the other. The restoration of peace must be sought for its own sake, in the general interest of all and in the particular interest of the peoples concerned. In this connexion the most in-

^{5/} Mr. Piccioni spoke in Italian. The French version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

interesting point in Mr. Goldberg's statements on Viet-Nam [1412th meeting] seems to me to be his assurance that the United States is not seeking a military solution to the conflict, but a political solution. Moreover, he has set out the position of the United States on the three essential questions—the bombings, the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country and the participation in peace negotiations—in terms which are not essentially very different from the proposals or ideas advanced by world figures whose impartiality and objectivity in this matter cannot be doubted. No careful observer could therefore deny that the necessary basis for starting negotiations already exists. It is no longer a question of prerequisites for negotiations; the problem is to find a common political will to negotiate. Here we enter into the complicated field of psychological reactions and counter-reactions.

55. I should like, however, to say a few words on a key factor under which the whole situation may be subsumed: I mean mistrust. For there is dreadful and widespread mistrust. This, I repeat, is not surprising, if we remember that we are up against a bloody conflict, accompanied by the mourning, the misery and the havoc that we all deplore. How can this distrust be overcome? Everything shows that it can be overcome only by putting to the test the sincerity of publicly adopted attitudes which are considered by the other party as mere tricks of propaganda. Experience, however, shows that, if people are to know what to believe, suitable exchanges of view are necessary. Only after such exchange can the first step towards agreement be taken and perhaps be made public immediately afterwards. As things stand at present, however, at least so far as the United Nations is concerned, we are still at the stage of public declarations which, more than anything else, nourish sterile polemics. If we really want to advance in the right direction, we shall have to think of something new in order to destroy the barrier of mistrust.

56. Lastly, there is a marked uncertainty about the objectives pursued by the parties, even in regard to the future, after the present conflict has been settled. Here again a positive result can be achieved only through new and appropriate procedures.

57. Another question which has given rise to a vicious circle, from which we have not yet managed to break out, is that of the universality of the United Nations. In this matter the Italian delegation still believes that certain considerations it put forward last year remain valid.

58. If the requirement of the Organization's universality is to be met, with full respect by States for the principles of the Charter, the United Nations must be coextensive with the entire international community and every Member must fulfil the obligations laid down in the Charter. In this connexion the Italian delegation warmly welcomes the return of Indonesia to the Organization; not only has the United Nations thus been able to welcome back a State of more than 100 million inhabitants, but it has also seen the end of a secession movement which could have caused grave concern about the Organization's future.

59. At this moment, however, universality would mean the admission of States which are still absent.

We are not unaware that this question teems with practical difficulties.

60. In the first place, we are all well aware of the extreme divergences of attitude in regard to the representation of China in the United Nations. So long as this conflict of views persists and so long as the methods hitherto adopted are continued, not only will it be difficult to find a solution, but there will also be a danger of prolonging sterile polemics. Peking's attitude to the great problems of disarmament and the peaceful solution of the grave present conflicts is unquestionably not helping to overcome the serious objections of those who dispute the existence of favourable conditions for an immediate solution of the problem.

61. In view of the considerations I have mentioned, one may ask certain constructive questions.

62. I would first ask those who, seeing only one side of the question, underestimate its gravity. I would ask them whether they have yet done anything, and whether they could not do more, to induce Peking to take an attitude which would cease to arouse the present mistrust.

63. A second question could be addressed to everyone in general and especially to those who, faced with the grave difficulties engendered by this problem, believe that today no solution is really feasible. We might ask ourselves whether it would not be worthwhile, using appropriate procedures and instruments, if necessary new ones, to make an objective study, within the United Nations and with the greatest discretion, of all elements of the problem, including its difficulties, and of the conditions, means and stages by which it could be resolved, while fully respecting the principles of the United Nations.

64. Reflection on these two questions might help towards a movement from different points of view, which would bring us all closer to a rational solution without creating new problems.

65. Turning now to the problems of disarmament, I want first of all to confirm once again the Italian Government's firm intention of actively encouraging any honest and fair agreement in this field, for we consider an agreement essential for the preservation and strengthening of peace. The long-term objective is still the one set by the United Nations: namely, general and complete disarmament. Nevertheless, as the recommendations of the General Assembly show, the conclusion of partial agreements on disarmament, which would reduce the most immediate dangers and rapidly improve mutual trust, is becoming an ever more urgent necessity and the most practical way of advancing step by step towards general disarmament and promoting the economic and social progress of all peoples.

66. The Eighteen-Nation Committee in Geneva, of which Italy is a member, has followed these guide lines by studying two problems particularly thoroughly this year—the ban on underground testing and the question of non-proliferation—the solution of which is a prerequisite for any progress towards disarmament.

67. Unfortunately, the Eighteen-Nation Committee has not yet succeeded in working out draft treaties on these matters for submission to the Assembly. The Italian delegation, which has made every possible effort in Geneva, cannot but express its heartfelt regret at the continuing difficulties, but considers that the efforts should be maintained and intensified and that advantage should be taken of the limited but not insignificant results already achieved.

68. We have, in fact, the impression that, at least as far as non-proliferation is concerned, the Geneva proceedings have revealed the existence of certain not unimportant spheres of agreement; for this reason Italy thought it opportune to submit a memorandum^{1/} annexed to the report of the Eighteen-Nation Committee, with a view to clarifying the features common to the two draft treaties on non-proliferation. We think it would be useful to consolidate these bases of agreement by drawing up some articles of the treaty forthwith, so as to define the remaining obstacles and make it easier to remove them. The Italian delegation hopes that the Assembly will regard this approach, which is not only valuable from a procedural point of view but also has a definite political significance, as constructive and worth recommending to the negotiators in Geneva.

69. We are, of course, aware that a divergence of opinion still exists in regard to the conception of "nuclear weapons control". The Western view on this matter is that if the decision to use nuclear weapons remains in the hands of the present nuclear countries, there can be no proliferation, in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the General Assembly's recommendations themselves.

70. The Italian delegation hopes that a final and complete solution to the problem of non-proliferation can be found in the near future and that was why it immediately and gladly endorsed the Soviet draft resolution [A/C.1/L.368/Rev.1 and Add.1-6] on banning any measure which might put further obstacles in the way of agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. If however, the conclusion of a formal treaty on this subject is to be further delayed, we think it advisable to remind the Assembly of the possible interim solution which we envisaged last year. As you know, this was contained in the Italian proposal^{2/} for a temporary and supervised nuclear moratorium to be achieved by means of unilateral declarations renouncing the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Our idea, which was favourably and appreciatively received by the Assembly at its last session, could, if necessary, be redrafted and brought up to date so as to take into account the comments made on it by all delegations.

71. In our opinion special attention must be given to the requirements expressed by the non-aligned countries in the course of the debate, within the framework of a renunciation of nuclear weapons on their part, and set out in the Memorandum submitted by those countries in Geneva.^{3/} In particular, we fully

understand their desire for security guarantees and we share their view on this matter.

72. I am sure that the Assembly will likewise try to give the closest attention to all the other problems discussed in Geneva, above all to that of the banning of underground tests and the United States' proposals for freezing stocks of nuclear weapons. In regard to the first point, a great many new ideas and interesting proposals which could facilitate agreement on the invariably controversial question of international inspection were put forward at the Geneva negotiations. In regard to the United States proposals for a freezing of stocks, the Italian delegation is convinced that to stop production of fissile material for military purposes and of offensive and defensive nuclear strategic devices would open up wide possibilities for an effective halt to the arms race in the most important and dangerous sectors. In our opinion the Assembly cannot escape the duty of devoting particular attention to this question.

73. In regard to collateral measures, moreover, the offer made by President Johnson on 8 October for a balanced reduction of the forces in Germany could open the way to agreements of some kind, which would unquestionably contribute towards further reducing international tension.

74. The Eighteen-Nation Committee, even if it has not managed to conclude any agreement, has nevertheless achieved a solid result in providing us with the elements of further progress; and that is one of the reasons why, at the beginning of my statement today, I did not feel that I ought to side with the extreme pessimists. The Geneva Conference, if it has not yet succeeded in overcoming the negative factors outside its control, has nevertheless served to keep actively in being a dialogue which is essential for peace. The fact that the Western representatives and those of the Eastern bloc have continued to work in an atmosphere of cordiality and co-operation and the very fact that the common will for disarmament and a relaxation of tension has been reaffirmed in Geneva—these facts are of appreciable and concrete political significance. It therefore seems obvious to us that these Geneva contacts must be actively pursued and developed.

75. One of the problems most closely bound up with that of disarmament is without doubt the problem of European security. During the last twelve months, while there has admittedly been no appreciable progress towards European political unification, the European Economic Community has entered upon a phase of consolidation, in which the chief obstacles in its path could be overcome. At the same time, as I said earlier, there have been many exchanges of political, economic and cultural views among representatives of the Western European Governments and those of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, and Italy has taken a very active part in them.

76. These meetings and exchanges of views have given both sides an opportunity of getting to know each other's positions better and even, in certain cases, reducing the distance between these positions. There is certainly still a long way to go, but we have the encouraging feeling that we are now on the right road

^{1/} Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for 1966, DC/228, annex 1, section Q.

^{2/} Ibid., Supplement for January-December 1965, DC/227, annex 1, section D.

^{3/} Ibid., Supplement for 1966, DC/228, annex 1, section P.

and this is what matters most. President Johnson's statements of 7 October 1966 appear as a first confirmation of that feeling.

77. Against this new background, the question of European security appears in a more hopeful light and that obliges us to redouble our efforts to find, all of us together, a meeting ground. I would add that this understanding should obviously make it possible also satisfactorily to solve the problem of German reunification, without which it will be impossible to regard the situation in Europe as finally stabilized.

78. In thinking about intercontinental relations, I am led to the problems of Latin America, in which Italy's interest is not dictated by political calculation, but derives from our common human, cultural and religious origins with the people of that region. Moreover, political contacts between members of the Italian Government and those of the Latin American Governments have been particularly frequent in 1966 and this alone shows both our interest in Latin America and our sincere and fraternal friendship for that region. During the last twelve months Italy and all the Latin American Governments have succeeded in bringing to fruition the plan of establishing an Institute for Latin America in Rome. The Institute will not only help to strengthen the ties between Europe and Latin America, but will also facilitate the study and solution of important regional problems which are already under consideration and which can be solved only by concerted effort.

79. Before concluding this part of my statement, which concerns the various continents, I should like to say a word about Africa. The position of the Italian delegation on the problem of South West Africa is already known from the statement made by Mr. Vinci in the debate on that question [1431st meeting]. I hope the Assembly will give thought to the considerations we have already put forward. I should like, however, to reaffirm at this juncture that our attitude on decolonization is one of complete co-operation. The African countries know this from experience and it is our firm intention to continue on the same course until the final goal is attained. In regard to Rhodesia we hope that the rebellion will quickly end and give way to an appropriate constitutional evolution—based, that is to say, on a formula recognizing the legitimate rights of the majority of the population—and that in consequence the Security Council will not find itself obliged to adopt the drastic measures which the situation would otherwise unavoidably demand. The situation in Rhodesia is particularly disturbing to us, in that it is at root accompanied by an extension of racial discrimination, of that apartheid which we must most vigorously combat until it is totally eradicated.

80. I should like now briefly to set out the Italian delegation's opinion on certain problems concerning the future of the United Nations. I shall start with the financial problem.

81. During the last session our attention was repeatedly drawn to the state of our finances. After twenty years of existence and after a controversy which had been stifled rather than settled, it was inevitable that the United Nations should take stock of its financial position and see if it was not time to

make certain changes in its own administrative and budgetary procedures and those of the specialized agencies, in order to make those procedures more consonant with reality.

82. In that spirit Italy welcomed the decision, adopted at the last session,^{10/} to set up a Committee of Experts on this subject. No organization can function effectively if its finances are not in order and if it does not make proper use of the resources put at its disposal. That this was the general opinion of Member States was shown by the unanimous approval given to the proposal to set up the Committee of Experts.

83. The principles I have just mentioned dictated our approach in participating in the work of the Committee of Fourteen.^{11/} We were glad to find that the representative of Italy, whose election to the Chair showed the confidence placed in him by his colleagues, was assisted in his task by their solid support and co-operation, the results of which are reflected in the final report. The Committee did excellent work and its conclusions offer us a firm basis on which to rest our hopes for the future.

84. In its first report [A/6289 and Add.1 and 2] the Committee of Fourteen furnished us with detailed information on the financial situation of the United Nations. In its report of 19 July [A/6343] it made recommendations for the best possible use of the available resources.

85. In discharging the double task laid upon us, Italy has tried, first, to find meeting points for differing points of view and, secondly, to seek, not so much economies as the most economical ways of using the means available.

86. The human, financial and material resources at the disposal of the United Nations and its family of organizations are indeed slender in relation to the needs of the international community and only by strictly adhering to rules, simplifying procedures and practising economy shall we be able to make these resources most effective in relation to the needs.

87. This threefold slogan—"strictness, simplification, economy"—will therefore guide the Italian delegation at this session and we are confident that the Assembly itself will endorse this by adopting the conclusions of the Committee of Fourteen.

88. Above all, however, we hope that, in the light of the facts that emerge from the Committee's first report, Member States which have not yet paid the voluntary contributions necessary to put the Organization's finances on a sound basis will delay no longer in responding to the appeal addressed to them from all sides.

89. In expressing this hope my delegation unreservedly associates itself with the renewed appeal of the Secretary-General who, in his statement of 1 September and in the Introduction to this Annual Report [A/6301/Add.1], both of which show a justified concern for restoring the Organization's solvency

^{10/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Twentieth Session, Annexes, agenda item 76, document A/6152, para. 1.

^{11/} Ad Hoc Committee of Experts to Examine the Finances of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies.

and enabling it to cope with its important present and future tasks, was led to take a pessimistic view. We earnestly hope that the reasons for his pessimism will disappear.

90. Even though there may be only a partial link between the financial problem and peace-keeping, it would be illusory to imagine that one can be solved independently of the other. We are, therefore, not surprised to find that the financial deadlock is accompanied by a standstill in regard to defining the principles of peace-keeping.

91. There had indeed been a hope that the Committee of Thirty-Three^{12/} would be able to submit concrete proposals to the Assembly—as was requested in resolution 2053 (XX)—and that the guidelines for United Nations action in this field, which is the most important, indeed vital for the Organization, could thus be laid down.

92. We have to note with regret that, despite the patient and constructive efforts of the Chairman of the Committee and his immediate assistants, this has not been possible. Consequently, the Committee's task now devolves upon the Assembly, which must therefore be ready to tackle it directly and in its substance, without allowing itself to be disheartened by the difficulties and complications which prevented the Committee of Thirty-Three from making rapid progress and achieving a more positive result.

93. At this point the Assembly must show both imagination and a most acute sense of reality, for we have to explore every possibility of urgently providing the Organization with the machinery which will enable it, both institutionally and financially, to carry out its statutory functions in the matter of peace and security. Italy, for its part, undertakes, as in the past, to contribute constructively towards this end.

94. My country is proceeding on the assumption that in providing the Organization with the possibility and means of intervention we shall be guaranteeing not only the security of Member States which lack the material means of guaranteeing their own security—and these are the majority—but also their real independence and freedom. We therefore hope that certain States will be willing to make their positions of principle less rigid and to put aside considerations of doctrine or prestige, thus facilitating the realization of the ideals of peace and international co-operation; for if these ideals are to transcend nationalism and ideology, they must be common to all members of the international community. If we follow the path pointed out to us in an unforgettable message delivered to us in this very Hall on 4 October 1965 [1347th meeting] we may be sure of moving towards a period of peace and world progress.

95. It is the duty of the United Nations not only to defend peace, but also to build it. But there can be no solid foundation on which to build until the international community has first wiped out the scourges of poverty, disease and ignorance. The United Nations is putting 85 per cent of its human and material resources to building an enlightened and well-balanced international community. All through the year the

halls of the United Nations and its specialized agencies resound with debates on economic and social questions. Yet, if we were to take stock of all these efforts and initiatives, we should not yet find cause for rejoicing.

96. The flow of capital to developing countries, their terms of trade and their economic growth rate have not yet reached the target level. If forecasts were to be based solely on extrapolation of present data, they would give a similar picture.

97. In regard to the problems of economic development, however, it must be said that the international community has achieved progress in the realm of ideas and theory. We no longer regard these problems as the responsibility of some countries alone, but of the international community as a whole. For moral, as well as social and economic reasons, both the industrialized and the developing countries have a direct interest in their solution.

98. The transition from theory to practice is admittedly difficult and laborious; but it is none the less true that a decisive stage has been reached. It is now the job of the international organizations to transform ideas into action. We are therefore confident that all the United Nations agencies, particularly those which have been recently established, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), those which are the result of reorganization, like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), or those which are still in process of formation, like the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), will make a decisive contribution to this task.

99. Mr. Tončić-Sorinj, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Austria, speaking in the general debate [1430th meeting], reported to the Assembly on the exploratory talks which took place between Italy and Austria, in pursuance of resolutions 1497 (XV) of 31 October 1960 and 1661 (XVI) of 28 November 1961, concerning the status of the German-speaking inhabitants of the Province of Bolzano and the application and interpretation of the Paris Agreement of 5 September 1946.

100. I should like now, for my part, to confirm that the outcome of these talks was promising. When the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries met in Paris in December 1964, it seemed that we were near to finding a way of settling this international dispute; but the Vienna Government, in its communication of 30 March 1965, did not appear to appreciate that possibility.

101. Italy agreed to the subsequent meetings in order to open the way to new possibilities. Unfortunately, we have recently witnessed a violent recrudescence of terrorist activity which has aroused strong and justifiable indignation in my country, obviously with unfavourable repercussions.

102. The Austrian Government has formally condemned these acts of terrorism and I take note of the recent statements on this subject made by Mr. Tončić in this Assembly. As we notified Vienna on 6 October 1966, we expect these statements to be accompanied by appropriate steps to prevent acts which could damage our mutual relations, the satisfactory mainte-

^{12/} Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations.

nance of which is the essential purpose of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 1497 (XV) of 31 October 1960.

103. After hearing the statements made by Mr. Tončić I am, of course, confident that the Austrian Government will respond to this appeal by agreeing to assist in removing the serious obstacle which terrorism places in the path of friendly relations between Italy and Austria and to conform to the United Nations resolutions to which attention has repeatedly been drawn.