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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Official Records



President: Mr. Lazar MOJSOV (Yugoslavia).

AGENDA ITEM 8

General debate (continued)

25. Mr. ANDREOTTI (Italy) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, today the Italian delegation feels gratified for two reasons: first, because we are addressing this august Assembly under the presidency of the eminent representative of a great country linked with Italy by close relations of friendship and co-operation, which have been given recent expression in the Treaty of Osimo,¹ an international instrument generally regarded as having translated into specific programmes the spirit of innovation which should provide a basis for relations between neighbouring peoples; and secondly, because we have the opportunity of working under your most competent guidance. The best recognition of your merits, Mr. President, lies in the very fact of your having been called upon to preside over four sessions of the General Assembly, a record which it will be difficult to beat in the future.

26. I should like also to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose attachment to the cause of our Organization is based on such staunch and profound moral convictions that he has won the trust and

¹ Treaty between the Italian Republic and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, signed at Osimo on 10 November 1975.

admiration of us all. We in Italy have vivid memories of his official visit to Rome in July 1977, and I myself remember it with special pleasure, as it gave me the opportunity of holding with him constructive and fruitful talks and an exchange of views of the greatest interest on the major problems facing the United Nations.

27. The convening, for the first time, of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is an event whose significance has not escaped the attention of any country, as proven by the participation of many leaders from every region of the world. In a word, this special session reflects a growing awareness of the fact that mankind is now at the crossroads: one path may lead to a nuclear catastrophe, the other to a world of peace and well-being. Of all transitional periods throughout history, ours is the most crucial. For the first time, the technical and scientific revolution has placed in the hands of men the means either of destroying the life of their own kind, or of causing it everywhere to flourish. The symptoms of these two possible developments are all present. On the one hand, seeds of disintegration appear in our national communities and in the international community; on the other hand, a rapid, and sometimes overwhelming, economic and social upsurge, although confined to certain countries or regions, reveals the enormous potential that today can be used by human intelligence. The duty of our Governments is therefore, on the one hand, to channel this development towards objectives of regional and international equilibrium and, on the other, to protect our national entities from threats of disintegration by helping to prevent the spread of disorder across our frontiers. Peace does not mean only the absence of war. We must remind ourselves that the confusion of values and the intensification of political crime nullify the benefits of peace. In order to ensure peace, we feel it essential to undertake far-reaching measures in order to establish a more just and more lasting world-wide equilibrium. It is to achieve this goal that we have gathered together here: to promote disarmament actually means cutting the main Gordian knot of our times and, together with it, the other knots that surround it.

28. When we look back to assess the progress achieved to date in this field, we must admit objectively that it has been inadequate. It would be unfair, however, to assert that nothing has been done and that the results achieved in all these years, whether at Geneva or here at Headquarters, have been negligible. Indeed, the various significant multilateral measures concluded, not to mention the bilateral agreements reached between the two major Powers, are proof of the contrary.

29. And yet, the destructive power of the weapons which exist in the arsenals of the world, already in themselves sufficient to annihilate most of the life on our planet, continues to increase and military technologies are becoming more and more sophisticated. New and intensive efforts by the international community are therefore necessary to accelerate progress along the path of disarmament.

30. This special session offers us a valuable opportunity to discuss realistically, but also with perspicacity, this subject of universal interest. From the very beginning of our work, we have noted to what extent the level and the tone

of our discussions confirm the general determination to halt and then reverse the armaments spiral, thus giving also a fresh impetus to the dialogue between the great Powers and creating an atmosphere of greater co-operation at the world level.

31. In this respect, I should like to thank the Minister of State of Denmark for the effective way in which she summed up the views of the nine members of the European Community on a number of problems of particular interest which will be considered by this Assembly in a few days [7th meeting]. For its part, Italy is firmly convinced that it will continue to co-operate with all other countries in the quest for solutions, which we want to be just and in conformity with the interests of peace and general security.

32. For Italy, the maintenance of peace is, perhaps more than for the other countries, a deeply-felt need. Indeed, whole generations of Italians have not known peace in the best years of their lives, not only because of Italy's participation in two world wars, but also because of a series of conflicts in which Italy was almost permanently involved for some 35 years right up to the war of liberation from nazi-fascist oppression.

33. As a matter of fact, the search for peace and human understanding based on international co-operation and solidarity has for centuries been a characteristic of our culture. Italy therefore has striven constantly throughout the last 30 years to transcend purely nationalist attitudes, with the conviction of thus making an effective contribution to the cause of peace and to the elimination of many of the factors likely to endanger it. In this respect, I should like to stress that the existence of the European Community represents today a valuable and basic contribution to the maintenance of peace on the old continent, as was the intention of its founders.

34. As regards the global aspects of disarmament, Italy has always considered that the maintenance of an adequate level of armaments, and the uncertain balance of forces which derives from them and on which peace is now based, are harsh necessities imposed by our contemporary situation, which, notwithstanding the general efforts to overcome it, has not yet evolved in a more desirable direction. The Italian Government, for its part, has constantly striven, in every forum and on every appropriate occasion, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to improve the basic components of the international situation and to re-establish an atmosphere of co-operation and trust, which are essential conditions for reversing the arms race. By signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Italy has renounced the manufacture and acquisition of atomic weapons, thus making a tangible contribution to the achievement of the objective of non-proliferation, both vertical and horizontal, which constitutes one of the imperatives of our time. Furthermore, Italy is playing an active role in the negotiations currently taking place in Vienna for the balanced reduction of forces designed to strengthen stability and security in central Europe through substantial reductions in forces and weapons in that area.

35. Moreover, both at Geneva and here in New York and more recently in the Preparatory Committee for this special session, the representatives of Italy have contributed ceaselessly and constructively to the efforts made to stimulate the process of disarmament.

36. The Italian Government intends to persevere with and to intensify this policy, without allowing itself to be discouraged by obstacles whose magnitude we can appreciate as a result of our long experience in disarmament negotiations. Our consistent thoughts and actions will continue to be inspired, as they have been during these almost 20 years of discussion, by the Constitution of the Italian Republic which, in article 11, solemnly condemns war as an instrument of aggression and as a means of settling international disputes.

37. Allow me to quote some facts confirming this. In the spring of 1960, we co-sponsored in the Ten-Nation Committee on Disarmament a plan for general and complete disarmament in a free and peaceful world.² In 1961, we worked out a series of principles as our Italian contribution to the elaboration of the non-proliferation treaty. These principles established a link between the renunciation of nuclear weapons and the adoption of concrete disarmament measures by the major nuclear Powers. They also established a specific link between the commitment to the renunciation of nuclear weapons and the granting of precise guarantees, so as to achieve an equitable, effective and balanced treaty, like the one which was later adopted by the General Assembly, again with the active contribution of Italy. In 1965, we proposed to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament a unilateral nuclear moratorium,³ designed to allay, at least in part, the anxieties caused by nuclear proliferation and to encourage the nuclear Powers to conclude an agreement which would hasten the process of nuclear disarmament. Later on, we proposed that fissionable materials, to be drawn from the stockpile of the nuclear States, should be set aside for the peaceful uses of non-nuclear States. This initiative was taken in accordance with the philosophy underlying the non-proliferation treaty, which is designed to maintain a constant balance between the free renunciation of nuclear weapons by States and the assurances of broader international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy guaranteeing the non-nuclear States adequate supplies of energy essential for their development.

38. In 1969, we sponsored the draft resolution which proposed the Disarmament Decade [*resolution 2602 E (XXIV)*], in the framework of which the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament was invited to work out a comprehensive programme aimed at general and complete disarmament and to consider the possibility of setting aside for development purposes a substantial share of the resources thus released. The next year, in 1970, Italy submitted to the Conference a working paper containing the outline of a comprehensive programme of disarmament,⁴ for which the General Assembly expressed its appreciation.

² Document TNCD/3.

³ See *Official Records of the Disarmament Commission, Supplement for January to December 1965*, document DC/227, annex I, sect. D.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Supplement for 1970, document DC/233, annex C, sect. 38.

39. In view of the widespread hope of achieving further progress towards disarmament, the need for strengthening the United Nations has been rightly stressed. We favour such a strengthening, and not only from the viewpoint of the review of the negotiating machinery. Indeed, we believe it to be essential that States should first of all apply the principles of the Charter, to which they have freely subscribed.

40. A practical example of the application of these principles—if it proves possible to reach a general consensus to this end—might consist in setting aside even a modest percentage of the sums devoted to armaments for the international financing of the struggle against some of the most serious scourges of modern life, such as pollution of the human environment, deforestation, desertification, overcrowding of urban centres and certain areas, and so on. On the contrary, enormous resources continue to be spent on the arms race, in both the nuclear and conventional fields. The figures speak for themselves: \$400 thousand million a year, of which 20 per cent is spent on nuclear weapons and 80 per cent on conventional weapons.

41. This special session should give us the moral impetus to react, to give concrete shape to a serious process of balanced and comprehensive disarmament, and to proceed with the building of an international order truly inspired by the principles of the Charter. In the Italian Government's view, we must lay the foundations for a more peaceful future by working out specific directives for action, aimed at the entire international community, to be embodied in a global strategy for disarmament.

42. Our thinking has been comprehensively presented in five documents, which reflect the specific ideas that Italy has contributed to the preparation of the special session. The first document is the note which Mr. Arnaldo Forlani, Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent, on behalf of our Government, on 18 April 1977, to Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, in reply to the questionnaire in which Mr. Waldheim had invited Member States' views on the special session [A/S-10/1, vol. III, document A/AC.187/32].

43. The second is a working paper [*ibid.*, vol. V, document A/AC.187/87] which we and 10 other countries submitted several months ago. It contains ideas for the preparation of the declaration on disarmament, the solemn manifesto, in which the principles and general objectives which should inspire the efforts of the international community in the coming years will be set forth.

44. We have also, together with nine other countries, submitted a paper [*ibid.*, vol. VI, document A/AC.187/96] for use in the preparation of the other basic document which will be adopted by this special session, namely, the programme of action. This paper contains a series of proposals for practical and reasonable measures of disarmament and arms control, which could be adopted over a period of a few years. These measures would serve to facilitate agreement on further progress to be achieved, for example, at other special sessions of the General Assembly and, possibly, when the necessary conditions have materialized, within an *ad hoc* world conference, as proposed by certain States.

45. In proposing these initial short-term measures, we considered it useful to confirm that, in our opinion, a disarmament programme, both structured and comprehensive, should be outlined at the same time. Accordingly, Italy has submitted a document containing suggestions for a global disarmament programme [*ibid.*, document A/AC.187/97]. These suggestions are not designed to be superimposed on the short-term proposals but, rather, to complement them and to develop them harmoniously. We have acted with the conviction that, even in the preparation and application of partial disarmament measures, we must keep clearly in mind the final objectives we wish to achieve.

46. We have therefore suggested a series of measures to be implemented gradually, so as to bring about a process which will be, above all, continuous: the total prohibition of nuclear tests; the strengthening of the system of vertical and horizontal non-proliferation, and the consequent limitation, reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons; the banning of chemical weapons, in which regard we consider the proposals for a system of verification, which were submitted to us a few days ago, as a highly important contribution to the establishment of a valid and effective draft treaty; the conclusion of specific agreements on radiological weapons and other clearly identifiable weapons of mass destruction, based on new scientific principles; the initiation of a process to reduce conventional weapons and armed forces, which should be negotiated, and which should proceed in parallel with the efforts for nuclear disarmament within a framework in which all the components of the situation, as well as the need to maintain a balance between the various measures envisaged, would be taken into account. In this context, we have also proposed a system to tackle the disquieting problem of the growing international transfers of conventional weapons, which is reflected in an increase of tension in various geographical areas and in an intolerable economic and financial burden on many countries.

47. We have also stressed the need to prevent the extension of the arms race to outer space and the sea-bed.

48. To complete our ideas we have presented another document [*ibid.*, document A/AC.187/110] concerning the review of disarmament machinery. It is obvious, however, that any improvement in that machinery would yield very meagre results if, in the meantime, we did not all strengthen our resolve and commitment to increase our efforts to reduce the arms race.

49. Finally, since no disarmament measures can be truly effective unless they are properly controlled through an adequate system of verification, we, together with certain other delegations of countries particularly close to us, have contributed pertinent suggestions to be examined within the framework of discussions on the programme of action. We will also take into consideration any other suggestions made in this regard by previous speakers and study them with all the attention they deserve.

50. My Government has noted with satisfaction the elaboration of the draft programme of action for disarmament [*ibid.*, vol. I]. We consider it to be the first step in the co-

herent planning of a structured peace policy, which is our common goal. Besides short-term disarmament measures, the draft contains certain guidelines for future negotiations, the final objective of which is the effective and total elimination of armaments. These guidelines will be developed by the authors of the global medium-term and long-term plan, discussion of which, also on the initiative of Italy, has already started at Geneva, in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

51. This global plan, which envisages a series of stages without rigid time-limits, would, in our view, allow us to move forward gradually and in a balanced manner along the path of nuclear and conventional disarmament, without the present interruptions and deviations, each stage being designed to create the conditions of security and trust which are essential for the initiation of the next stage.

52. Many speakers have stressed the importance of nuclear disarmament. While naturally sharing this concern, I would like to draw attention again to the problem of conventional weapons. This is a particularly delicate field because nearly all countries are directly involved in it; some have gone so far, in seeking to equip themselves with modern weapons, as to divert irreplaceable material and human resources from the essential priorities of development.

53. Italy considers that the maintenance of common security can be guaranteed only by a balanced reduction of both nuclear and conventional weapons, to be sought by means of bilateral or multilateral agreements—both global and regional—aimed at reducing the volume of armaments in all regions, without exception, to the lowest possible level. The main aim is to avoid losing sight of the unitary concept of the disarmament process, which is divisible for functional purposes but not from an ideological angle.

54. I should like to reiterate our conviction that, in order to make effective progress on the path towards disarmament, every concrete measure should be accompanied by the parallel adoption of adequate procedures to guarantee collective security, so that all countries feel truly and adequately protected. In other words, each stage of disarmament should correspond to progress in seeking methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in building peace and in organizing international security forces. At first sight, this latter objective, set forth in Article 43 of the Charter, would seem to constitute the culmination of a fairly advanced stage in the processes of disarmament and in the establishment of a new international economic order more suited to the needs of our time. In our opinion, however, it would not be superfluous to start work now on this aspect of the problem because any rapprochement of our respective viewpoints can make it easier to resolve the substantive issues with which we are faced.

55. A number of speakers have mentioned the link between disarmament measures and development aid. Unfortunately, the economic inequalities between the various parts of the world have become more marked in recent years despite the efforts made to increase economic co-operation with the developing countries. The profound and serious imbalances which exist continue to constitute an

obstacle to the economic and social progress of mankind. Obviously, there is a link between development and disarmament; significant progress in disarmament will naturally result in the future in the mobilization of considerable resources and energies which can be used to improve the social and economic conditions of all people.

56. The technical and scientific progress of the twentieth century, the aspirations of peoples, the obvious need for integration, and the planetary challenges of our time have now linked the destiny of each nation to the destiny of all the others.

57. Mankind is witnessing the dawn of a unity which would have been inconceivable in the past because the need for it had never been felt before and the means of achieving it had never been available. Today each people must act in the conviction that only in unity lies the salvation of one and all.

58. It would be ingenuous to conceal the difficulties and obstacles of every kind which have to be surmounted, particularly as their origins go back thousands of years into the history of mankind. And it is impossible to eradicate these difficulties by an operation such as a modern surgeon might make in order to save a life. If, however, as I pointed out at the beginning of my statement, we recognize the need for a growing awareness of the alternative facing mankind, this session can make a substantial contribution in extending and consolidating this awareness by means of a clear proclamation of the dangers which threaten us and of the need to close ranks as members of the same family linked by a unity of aspirations and efforts.

59. This is the message which I bring to the whole world on behalf of the Italian Republic.