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FIRST COMMITTEE  
6th meeting  
held on  
Friday, 17 October 1980  
at 3 p.m.  
New York

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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 6TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. NAIK (Pakistan)

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A statement was made by:

Mr. Wyzner (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 34 TO 40, 42, 44 TO 49 AND 121 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling upon the first - and indeed the only - speaker for this afternoon, I should like to say that unfortunately we have not been able to follow on this occasion the understanding that there should be no fewer than four speakers scheduled for a meeting to take place. Some of the representatives who were listed to speak this afternoon are no longer in a position to do so, but we were informed of this only after the meeting had been scheduled.

It is my hope that, with members' co-operation, I shall be able to apply the understanding strictly in the future, and I would appeal to representatives to inform the Secretariat of their intention to withdraw from the list of speakers as far in advance as possible should similar circumstances arise again, so that meetings may be planned accordingly and so that the resources made available to the First Committee may be utilized to the maximum.

Mr. WYZNER (Poland): It gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the British delegation, our sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election as Chairman of this important Committee.. I am sure that your negotiating skill as well as your extensive disarmament experience and expertise will be major assets which you will not fail to put to the best use in the interest of our work. I also wish to associate my delegation with all the good wishes expressed to you and the other officers of the Committee for every success in the discharge of your exacting duties.

In my statement today, I should like to address certain urgent issues raised at the initiative of the Soviet delegation in agenda item 121 and subsequently amply clarified in the Soviet memorandum on 'Peace, Disarmament and International Security Guarantees'. It is my intention to comment at a suitable later date on those agenda items of the Assembly's current session which are covered in the annual report of the Committee on Disarmament or which otherwise emanate from disarmament-related efforts pursued at Geneva throughout 1980.

(Mr. Wyzner, Poland)

As we perceive it, the general debate at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, concluded a few days ago, clearly confirmed once again that international relations in Europe and in the world at large have been of late in the grip of a renewed phase of tensions. These tensions indeed cast a long shadow on the prospects for the development of co-operation. Political and diplomatic contacts and the dialogue so important for solving pressing and crucial problems have become sporadic and the negotiating process has faltered or come to a standstill. The arms race, be it conventional or nuclear, has not only continued unabated but has actually gained momentum, posing a mounting threat to peace and security throughout the world.

A realistic assessment of the dangerous trends in the development of the international situation, as well as a deep analysis of the underlying causes of tensions and conflicts, was given last May in the declaration of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty. Their analysis was restated from the rostrum of the General Assembly in the respective statements during the general debate by heads of delegation of the socialist countries of Europe.

The present dangerous downturn in the international situation appears to stem from certain trends apparent for quite some time now. The main threat to peace and détente comes from the arms race fanned by the spokesmen of cold war and the military-industrial complexes within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bloc day-dreaming about the revival of the position-of-strength policy.

It is entirely natural that the socialist countries, unswervingly committed as they are to the policy of détente, arms reduction and disarmament, as well as the development of all-round international co-operation, refuse to be reconciled to such trends. They continue their indefatigable struggle for peace and the strengthening of international security. To this end they come forth with initiatives and proposals aimed at averting confrontation and promoting a climate conducive to an early resolution, through negotiations, of mankind's most pressing and complex problems.

Addressing these issues at the recent Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, the First Secretary of the Central Committee, Stanislaw Kania, stated that Poland had always sided with

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those forces and shared those considerations which held it imperative to oppose the arms race and attempts to rekindle cold war, to aggravate the international atmosphere and pursue a policy from a position of strength. In the continuing international dialogue Poland has always maintained a constructive position, taking up matters that are important, urgent and ripe for solution and coming forward half-way to consider with an open mind all constructive proposals and arguments. Poland will continue to pursue that policy.

The draft resolution contained in document A/35/241, annexed to the letter which Andrei Gromyko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, has addressed to the Secretary-General concerning urgent measures for reducing the danger of war, is a most timely and realistic step. At a time when the international scene is increasingly clouded by grave developments, it is a measure of the utmost importance and practical relevance. The Polish Government lends that initiative its vigorous support. As the Chairman of my delegation, Minister for Foreign Affairs Jozef Czyrek, stated in the general debate on 25 September, that initiative, if taken up

"... would give a new, broader dimension to the struggle for a more secure world for us and for the generations to come."

(A/35/PV.10, p. 29-30)

Indeed, one of the immediate results of the Soviet proposal would be the creation of an international political environment not only more secure but also more propitious for a sober assessment of the options before the international community: either to follow head-on the course of unrestrained armaments and confrontation or to seek, through patient and painstaking negotiation, to reduce the ominous threats to world peace and security which seem to loom ever larger on the political horizon. A stark, almost apocalyptic, vision of some of these threats was vividly brought to us in the thought-provoking statement of the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Garcia Robles, which inaugurated our debate last Wednesday.

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My delegation believes that the collective wisdom of the international community will facilitate the choice of the only sensible alternative - that of peace and negotiation.

The initiative of the Soviet Union would, in effect, replace complacency -- not to say myopia - with genuine concern for the outcome of the critically important contest between the spiralling arms race and the endeavours to check it and bring about genuine disarmament. In the complicated and precarious international situation now obtaining in many parts of the globe, constructive action along the lines of the Soviet proposal must, in our opinion, have a beneficial calming effect on relations between States. It would be a real step towards reducing the threat of war.

At a time when the policy of détente is being put to a severe test, when time-sanctioned principles of parity and undiminished security are increasingly being eroded by the advocacy of the concepts of strategic superiority and one-sided advantage, we need urgently to look for imaginative and realistic initiatives. In the view of the Polish delegation, these requirements are met in the Soviet proposal on scaling down the military activity of States belonging to military alliances.

Indeed, the call for those States formally to renounce the expansion of existing, or the creation of new, military political groupings takes on special significance against the background of the policy of the State parties to the Warsaw Treaty, restated in the Warsaw Declaration of last May, and circulated as an official document of the United Nations under the symbol A/35/237.

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As will be recalled, the signatories of the document inter alia declared once again that they had never sought and would never seek military superiority and that they wished to ensure military balance at ever lower levels and to lessen and subsequently eliminate military confrontation in Europe.

In our opinion, overcoming the division of the world into military-political groupings, reducing the level of confrontation between them and strengthening confidence between all States would certainly be in the interest of all peoples and in the interest of world peace.

The proposal addressed to the permanent members of the Security Council and other States to agree to an early cut-off date beyond which they would commit themselves not to expand their armed forces and conventional weapons, as a first step to their subsequent reduction, would in our view be more than a mere confidence-building measure. In the words of the Final Document of the tenth Special Session, devoted to Disarmament, an international agreement on the limitation of conventional armed forces and armaments would stimulate progress in the nuclear field. It would go a long way towards releasing important human and material resources and diverting them to development purposes. These two possible effects of the proposal, apart from its intrinsic value, fully justify constructive and careful examination of the concept of non-increase of the conventional military potential of States.

The proposal which the Soviet Union has brought to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly for consideration and positive action recognizes in no uncertain terms the high priority and urgency of measures in the nuclear field.

The alarming course and dimension of the nuclear arms race and the at best only limited success of the efforts which have been deployed so far to contain that trend have for a long time been the principal factor behind the legitimate concern of non-nuclear-weapon States for their security in the nuclear age. My delegation is certainly not alone in believing

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that this concern stems from the most profound dissatisfaction with the concept of international security based, in the first place, on the precarious balance of fear. Therefore, the desire of the non-nuclear-weapon States to obtain effective assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is well founded and should focus the attention of the nuclear-weapon Powers.

The history of efforts to secure such assurances in which your country, Mr. Chairman, has played a major role, is long, and I hardly need recall it. Originating with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Security Council resolution 255 (1968), it was a major issue at the two NPT review conferences, at the United Nations and in the Committee on Disarmament where, as we know, a special subsidiary body gave it careful attention, both in 1979 and in 1980.

In our view, the most suitable formula of effective security assurances should provide for an international convention-type agreement of a juridically binding nature. Under such an agreement, the nuclear-weapon Powers would commit themselves not to use nuclear weapons or threaten their use against non-nuclear-weapon States parties to such a convention. The latter, on their part, would assume a corresponding obligation not to produce, acquire or otherwise have such weapons on their territories.

Regrettably, as follows from the report of the Committee on Disarmament, no conclusive progress has proved possible so far on that or any other formula of assurances. The present initiative of the Soviet Union clearly indicates that the matter is too vitally important to be shelved once more. In a spirit of constructive compromise it offers for consideration a possible interim arrangement: namely, identical declarations of the nuclear-weapon States, possibly embodied in a Security Council resolution, concerning the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States which have no such weapons on their territories.

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The Polish delegation believes that the international community cannot afford to pass up this practical and realistic proposal. Given the goodwill of all nuclear-weapon Powers, it could result in a significant and meaningful reinforcement of the security of all States. We should hope that such a measure, if agreed upon, would eventually encourage States to translate into practical policy also the principle of the non-use or threat of use of force in international relations.

My country has always attached major importance to the earliest agreement on the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests. Having been advocated in countless General Assembly resolutions, including the Final Document of the special session and resolution 34/73 of 1979, such a measure, if strictly adhered to by all nuclear-weapon Powers, would effectively contribute to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and the consolidation of the non-proliferation régime. Its net effect would, by and large, mean a step forward towards the containment of the threat of a nuclear conflict.

In spite of the sustained negotiating effort which has been continued trilaterally and multilaterally, at the United Nations and in the Committee on Disarmament, only limited tangible progress has been made so far. As the Secretary-General succinctly observed in his report on the work of the Organization:

"...all the technical and scientific aspects of the problem /have/ been so fully explored that only a political decision /is/ necessary in order to achieve agreement." (A/35/1, p. 14)

Poland, therefore, welcomes the Soviet proposal that all the nuclear Powers declare a one-year moratorium on all nuclear-weapons tests. We consider that proposal as another manifestation of the political will of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to work for an agreement which is now realistically within reach. Indeed,

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such an agreement could materialize, provided a corresponding political will is demonstrated by all participants in the trilateral negotiations. My delegation trusts that the General Assembly will not fail to ask for, and obtain, an assurance from those Powers that they will take up the Soviet initiative and work with dedication and determination to elaborate an international treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

As the representative of the Soviet Union made plain in his lucid presentation of the initiative this morning, if acted upon in good faith the four elements of the proposal would be instrumental in achieving meaningful progress in efforts to check the arms race and, consequently, to reduce the danger of war.

For the reasons which I have ventured to present in my brief statement, the Polish delegation gives its full support to draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.1.

The CHAIRMAN: As I informed the Committee earlier, the representative of Poland was the only speaker for this afternoon.

The position with regard to Monday, 20 October is much the same. We shall meet in the morning at 10.30, but so far no delegation is inscribed to speak in the afternoon, and I shall therefore be obliged to cancel the meeting that was to have taken place then.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.