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N A T O   C O N F I D E N T I A L

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XXXVI SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
WITH DISARMAMENT EXPERTS

The Political Committee held its XXXVI Semi-annual Meeting with Disarmament Experts on 13th and 14th September, 1983. For the information of Permanent Representatives, I circulate at Annex the report by the Chairman, on his own responsibility, of the proceedings of the meeting.

(Signed) Eric da RIN

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XXXVI SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE  
WITH DISARMAMENT EXPERTS

ON 13TH-14TH SEPTEMBER, 1983

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The XXXVI semi-annual meeting of the Political Committee with Disarmament Experts took place at NATO Headquarters on 13th and 14th September, 1983. The Experts had a thorough exchange of views on the outcome of the recently concluded 1983 Summer session of the Committee on Disarmament. They also consulted on arms control and disarmament questions related to the upcoming 38th United Nations General Assembly (38th GA) in order to co-ordinate the Allies' positions and tactics on these issues. Furthermore, they considered a number of arms control and disarmament issues dealt with in other international bodies, including the UN Disarmament Committee (UNDC).

I. COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT (CD)

2. Under this heading of the Agenda, the Committee assessed the second part of the 1983 session of the CD and generally agreed that this was not characterised by any substantive progress even in those areas where potential progress was foreseeable; however, some decisions were taken like the enlargement of the membership and the change of denomination into Conference on Disarmament. Several Experts expressed the opinion that lack of progress in certain areas was to be mainly attributed to the Soviet passive attitude and inability to contribute significantly to the work of the Conference. Other Experts expressed disappointment in the increasing politicisation of this forum.

3. As far as tactics are concerned, most Experts felt that the West's performance during the negotiations was good thanks also to the effective co-ordination and co-operation among the Allied Western delegations, which must continue in the preparation for as well as during the next 1984 session.

4. In discussing Organisational Issues, most Experts expressed their Governments' appreciation for the moderate expansion of the CD and the Representatives of Greece, Norway, Spain and Turkey reiterated their countries' interest in becoming members of this body. As far as Working Groups in the CD are concerned, many Experts were reluctant to make any suggestion of increasing their number.

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5. The first substantive issue considered under this heading was Chemical Weapons (CW). Most Experts expressed appreciation for the work carried out by the CW Working Group. Under the Canadian Chairmanship, the WG was able to produce a consolidated document (CD/416) which will form a very good basis for the future work in January 1984. Many differences among the Allies were eliminated in the summer through consultations in the Western Group; the US and German Experts were confident that the Allies would continue to consult and harmonise their positions in order to further rule out the few remaining differences before the reconvening of the WG in January 1984. The US Expert regretted that the Soviets did not have concrete and substantive positions on the many useful Western papers introduced in Geneva on this issue and felt that any chance of real progress would now be dependent on the Soviet attitude and real willingness to conclude a CW Convention. The desirability of entering any drafting exercise of a Treaty text was discussed again and different opinions were expressed on this point.

6. Furthermore, the US Expert informed the Committee that his country did not feel it advisable to resume bilateral negotiations on CW with the Soviet Union at this time, though it was prepared to have informal bilateral contacts with all Delegations, including the Soviet one. He reported that at the end of the Summer session the US had taken the initiative of inviting observers to Tooele (Utah) for a visit of a CW facility which is actually destroying CW, in the week of 14th November, 1983. This initiative was considered as a very useful one also from a tactical point of view and was highly appreciated by all Experts. It was agreed that the participation of the neutral and non-aligned countries to this visit should be encouraged. The German Expert informed his colleagues that Germany too would organise a similar type of presentation in Munster, some time in June 1984.

7. Subsequently, the Committee briefly addressed the question of the CW use (Res. 37/98D) and the French Expert distributed the text of the French reply to the request of the UN Secretary General to provide a list of qualified experts.

8. The Experts thereafter addressed the Nuclear Test Ban (NTB) issue on which a variety of views still exists. The UK Expert informed his colleagues that his Government's position remained unchanged; he indicated that in the pursuit of a comprehensive test ban agreement, the outstanding issue of verification must first be solved. He further stated that at this point the British Authorities did not see any need for the WG to move into the stage of direct negotiations on a treaty, and would resist likely pressure from the Soviet Union

and its partners for such a move. The US Expert reaffirmed that his country's policy on the NTB issue had not changed and that it would not be profitable at this time to resume the trilateral negotiations. In answering a question put by an Expert, he reported that the US Administration was still reviewing its position on ITBT and PNET.

9. Some Experts expressed doubts over the possibility of reaching agreement once again on a limited mandate for the WG at the beginning of the next session of the CD, and concern about the difficult position of the Western Delegations. In this context, the German Expert suggested that the West might improve its position on this important issue by submitting a convincing and comprehensive verification concept which would put the East in a defensive position. As to the mandate for the WG, the US Expert thought that the WG had not at all fulfilled its mandate and stated that his country would resist any attempt to modify/extend the present mandate.

10. The Italian Expert shared the view expressed by others about the mandate for the WG and stressed the point that although Italy attached much importance to NTB, it attached an even greater importance to the security interests of the Alliance and to Allied solidarity. He hoped that a solution could be found that would take into account the technical/tactical and political aspects and safeguard the Western credibility.

11. Many Experts provided comments to the two valuable UK papers introduced in the CD (CD/383, CD/402). These were intended to be a contribution both for the education within the CD and in the consultation process within the Alliance. From the discussion on these specific working papers, it appeared that there was not an absolute and total consensus on the implications to be drawn from them. The UK Expert, in answering questions/remarks made by some Experts on the conclusions of the papers, emphasised that in the current status of technology, the UK Authorities did not see the possibility of making a distinction between nuclear peaceful explosions and explosions for military purposes. The French Expert reaffirmed his country's position on NTB.

12. The discussion of Prevention of Nuclear War (PNW) was led off by the German Expert who distributed a draft resolution which might be introduced at the 38th GA (see paragraph 18). Referring to the CD context, the US Expert expressed the opinion that the Western record on this issue was altogether positive, although he regretted that tactical and procedural manoeuvres had not allowed substantive discussions of this issue. He felt that the present formulation of this item in the CD Agenda allowed the discussion

of issues of Western interest. The Canadian Expert expressed concern over PNW which, like other initiatives (NSA, No-first use of nuclear weapons), was directed against NATO strategy of flexible response. The French Expert expressed doubts on the desirability of the German initiative.

13. As to Arms Control in Outer Space, the Experts exchanged views on the recent developments in the CD; in particular, the US Expert hoped that next February, at the beginning of the 1984 CD session, the question of a non-negotiating mandate could be quickly resolved in order to allow serious discussions including a review of the existing legal régime. He reaffirmed that his country remained willing to discuss outer space issues and that the entire range of arms control possibilities relevant to outer space were under the most serious consideration within the US Administration; this process, however, was not likely to be completed during the upcoming 38th GA. The US Expert was hopeful that it might be possible for the US Delegation in Geneva to make some positive suggestions for fruitful discussions at the next CD session and that at this time his country could not consider a resumption of bilateral negotiations with the USSR.

14. The UK Expert, like other Experts, welcomed the indication that the US Administration was giving serious consideration to this important matter and supported the Danish Expert's suggestion that it would be very helpful for the members of the Alliance to have a discussion at NATO Headquarters on the actual substance of some of the issues, once the US position had been determined.

15. The Experts also considered the Soviet draft "Treaty on banning the use of force in space and from space with respect to the earth", recently submitted by Soviet Foreign Minister A. Gromyko for inclusion in the 38th GA Agenda. There was general agreement that the draft treaty contained many flaws and that the essential weakness laid in the absence of satisfactory verification measures. Nevertheless, this initiative had given some tactical advantage to the Soviet Union and might well attract the attention of several countries. Other aspects of arms control in outer space were discussed in relation to the 38th GA (see paragraph 19).

16. The Experts then turned to a discussion of Radiological Weapons. While the French Expert reiterated his country's reservations about the political/military interest of a Convention on radiological weapons, the Belgian Expert pointed out that in spite of the limited importance of such a Convention, its achievement would indicate the Western attachment to arms control, constitute the first success for the CD and contribute to improving the present international situation.

The US Expert reported to the Committee on the results of the work carried out in Geneva by the two Groups (A, B) during the Summer session. He indicated that a draft bracketed text of a treaty had been prepared by Group A (now incorporated into the Working Group report to the CD) but that the attitude of a few NNA countries had deliberately blocked the possibility of further progress. He thought that a "simplified" Convention might lead to a positive conclusion of this exercise. Several Experts expressed the opinion that certain NNA countries should be urged to adopt a more flexible/realistic attitude on the question of linkage with other issues that do not pertain to a radiological convention.

17. The brief discussion of Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament (CPD) was led off by the Canadian Expert who expressed the view that there were no valid reasons to further pursue this sterile exercise and that the CPD should not even be dealt with by the CD since it was certainly not a negotiation. Several Experts shared this view and discussed possible ways for the Western countries to put an end to this useless process, like non-participation in the work, abstention from the vote at the 38th GA, etc. The Belgian Expert informed the Committee that Ambassador Garcia-Robles intended to form and chair some kind of Working Group in New York in the framework of the First Committee in order to produce a consensus document to be adopted by the 38th GA, in line with the CPD Working Group's recommendation (CD/415). Some Experts felt that should the CPD process not be completed in New York, it might possibly be adjourned sine-die in Geneva; some Experts warned, however, that the Western countries should not give the impression of boycotting the CPD process in order not to provoke counter-productive reactions.

## II. 38TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

18. Under this heading, the Experts turned to a discussion of possible Western initiatives at the 38th GA. The German Expert indicated that his Authorities intended to submit a resolution on Prevention of Nuclear War including all related matters, the draft text of which was distributed during the meeting; this initiative would counter the many resolutions on nuclear issues which are likely to be tabled by the East and the NNA. The Experts discussed the desirability for the West to introduce this resolution and its timing; preliminary comments and divergent opinions were expressed and it was considered that there would also be risks that such a resolution could attract unacceptable amendments which would place its sponsors in a difficult position. The Experts will carefully study the German draft, further consider this initiative and provide the German Authorities with comments/suggestions on tactics as well as on the substance at the latest in the Barton Group.

Furthermore, the German Expert informed the Committee that his country intended to submit again a procedural resolution on CBMs, requesting the UNDC to continue its deliberations on this matter.

19. The Italian Expert then opened the discussion of the Allied tactics in New York to deal with Arms Control in Outer Space, stressing the paramount need to preserve Allied solidarity and security interests in this delicate matter. The need for the introduction of a Western resolution was discussed, also in the light of the Soviet draft treaty recently submitted to the GA which gave some advantage to the Soviet Union and which will attract the attention of several countries. Reference was made to a possible initiative being taken by Australia in this field.

20. The US Expert indicated that her country was considering the preparation of a resolution on Radiological Weapons that would urge prompt action on the traditional aspects of those weapons, but would first discuss its feasibility with the Swedes and perhaps the Soviets. The US might also submit a resolution on Peace movements and one on Military expenditures, which would deal with the convening of a conference. On this issue, France is considering not joining the consensus in the traditional Rumanian resolution, due to this country's unwillingness to provide the UN with any data on its military budget. The French attitude was shared by other Experts who welcomed and assured support for the US initiative in New York. The Experts also exchanged views on the problem of a future mandate for the UN Experts Group and a possible Swedish initiative on this matter.

21. As far as Chemical weapons are concerned, the US Expert stressed the importance that her country continues to attach to the problem of a mechanism to receive evidence of chemical weapons' use pending a satisfactory outcome of the negotiations on a total ban of such weapons; she asked for any information about New Zealand taking again the initiative on this issue this year. In conclusion, it was generally felt that a draft Western resolution should be submitted to the upcoming 38th GA, taking into account the outcome of the report prepared by the consultant Experts Group, now under way.

22. Concerning the UN Resolution 37/98D "Provisional procedures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", the French Expert reported that his Authorities were considering the possibility for the GA to take note of the Experts Group's report and follow up this matter possibly by bringing up to date the WHO report of 1970 (Health Aspects of Chemical and Biological Weapons). He further explained his country's

intention to prepare a possible resolution entitled "Institutional arrangements relating to the process of disarmament", and asked for comments; several Experts expressed appreciation for this initiative and its aims and thought that the NNA countries should first be contacted, in order to explore their attitudes on this issue.

23. Norway would be prepared to proceed with a resolution on UNIDIR, in co-operation with other countries, and would also submit a procedural resolution on the outcome of the Seabed Review Conference

24. The Danish Expert reported that if the UN Experts Group on Conventional Disarmament would not be able to conclude its work during the now ongoing fifth session, his country would like to introduce a procedural resolution requesting the Secretary General to extend the mandate of the Group which would submit a final report to the 39th GA; the draft resolution would be circulated in the Political Committee in due time.

25. The German Expert led off a lengthy discussion concerning possible follow-up to Resolution 37/98C "Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons" which recommended holding a special conference. It was reported that Sweden might not pursue this initiative at the 38th GA perhaps because of the well-known negative Soviet reaction. The US Expert was of the opinion that in such a case a Western resolution needed to be submitted to underline continued interest in the subject and to exert pressure on the Soviet Union. The UK Expert shared this opinion and envisaged consultations between the co-depositaries and also among the Allies in order to co-ordinate actions to be taken and to consider the terms of the resolution. The Netherlands Expert wondered whether the problem concerning the establishment of a procedure to deal with issues concerning compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention could not be dealt with during the next Review Conference; some Experts thought that it would be better to deal with this matter in a specific ad hoc conference. From a legal point of view, several Experts were of the opinion that a specific conference could be convened even if one of the co-depositaries had made clear that his Government would not support the exercise and would not attend the conference.

26. As far as the NNA countries' resolutions are concerned, the German Expert informed the Committee that Sweden might take an initiative concerning the Maritime arms race and expressed concern about this new exercise; however, it seemed that no final decision had yet been taken. The Danish Expert reported



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that Sweden intended to table a draft resolution on the Freeze of nuclear weapons, similar to the one adopted by the 37th GA. The US Expert reported that Ambassador Garcia Robles intended to introduce a resolution on START and INF which, in addition to calling for a report to be given by the US and the Soviet Union to the GA, would call for the presence of UN observers to these negotiations.

III. OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

27. The first issue discussed by the Experts under this major heading was the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The US Expert informed the Committee that her country was proceeding with preparations for the third Review Conference (in 1985) and hoped to have the support of as many signatories as possible for a non-confrontational resolution at the 38th GA which would pave the way for a preparatory committee meeting in mid-1984. The UK Expert thought that before introducing this draft resolution to the 38th GA, it would be appropriate for the co-depositaries to consult the parties to the Treaty in a meeting in the margins of the GA. Many Experts stressed the importance of serious preparation, through consultations among the Allies, in advance of the first meeting of the preparatory committee; they were aware that the next NPT Review Conference would be a difficult and confrontational one.

28. The Italian Expert addressed the problems which are of interest to the NNA developing countries, many of which were not satisfied with the way in which the NPT had been applied so far. He felt that contacts between the Western group and the other groups could best take place in the framework of the preparatory committee meetings. The Canadian Expert stressed the interest of the Allies in the NPT; he felt that the Treaty itself was under attack by some NNA countries and that the Western response in the past had not been too effective both at the CD and in New York. The French Expert reaffirmed his country's particular position on the NPT.

29. The Norwegian Expert thereafter briefly reported on the Abled Treaty Review Conference and said that, contrary to his position, Norway shared the views expressed by the Allies at the CD meeting on 9th August, namely, that no fundamental developments had occurred which would lead to a revision of the Treaty.

In the ENMOD Convention, the importance was stressed of the need for the Allies to co-ordinate their positions in view of the Review Conference which should take place towards the end of 1984. The US Expert informed the Committee that his country was still reviewing the question concerning the scope

of the Convention. The French Expert reaffirmed that his country's position towards this Convention remained unchanged. The Italian Expert indicated that according to recent information Argentina would probably not raise the problem of the interpretation of the Convention, in relation to events in the Falkland Islands.

31. The Committee exchanged views on the Indian Ocean Peace Zone issue. The UK Expert reported that the Indians would appear to have taken over the lead on this subject and that they might adopt a more moderate attitude and not insist on the early convening of the Conference. He saw the essential need to maintain the unity of the Group of 11 to prevent matters proceeding in an undesirable direction. The Italian Expert added that the Group "Friends of the Chairman" was trying to find an acceptable vague formulation concerning the convening of the Conference and he expected that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus at the 38th GA.

32. The French Expert, on the issue of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ), briefly reported that the UN Ad Hoc Group was still at a preliminary stage of its work; the Turkish Expert indicated that the Soviets might raise this issue at the 38th GA. As to the substance of this issue, there is no change in the positions of the various Allied countries.

33. In the discussion of the World Disarmament Campaign (WDC), the question of convening a pledging conference for voluntary contributions by member states was addressed. The result of the discussion, as far as the intentions of the various Allies are concerned, are summarised hereafter. Denmark is considering giving a contribution and will inform the Allies when a final decision is taken; Canada might give a contribution but not at the conference; the United Kingdom intends to attend the conference but will not make a specific contribution since, in accordance with the guidelines agreed at the II SSOD, the WDC should be mainly funded from the regular UN budget; the Netherlands might reconsider their attitude in light of the line adopted by the United Kingdom; France will continue to provide funds to the UNIDIR; Norway will make reference to its contribution to the UNIDIR in a statement at the conference.

#### IV. UN DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

34. While few Experts made a quite positive assessment of the results of the last session, where minor progress could be detected, the US Expert and others expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of this body and voiced doubts about its usefulness.

V. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

35. In answering a specific question, the Chairman informed the Experts that the CDE issue was being presently considered by a number of bodies in NATO and that extensive consultations among the Allies on this important subject were well under way. Furthermore, the Chairman suggested 11th and 12th April, 1984, as possible dates for the next semi-annual meeting and the Experts were requested to consider such dates and provide their reactions to the Political Committee in due time.