

COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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22 February 1983
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING
held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 22 February 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG

(Mongolia)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria

Mr. A. TAFFAR

Mr. M. MAACHI

Argentina:

Mr. J.C. CARASALES

Mr. R. GARCIA MORITAN

Australia:

Mr. D. SADLEIR

Mr. R. STEELE

Mr. T. FINDLAY

Belgium:

Mr. A. ONKELINX

Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil:

Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA

Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. TELLALOV

Mr. P. POPCHEV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

U TIN KYAW HLAING

U THAN TUN

Canada:

Mr. D.S. McPHAIL

Mr. G.R. SKINNER

Mr. M. HAMBLIN

China:

Mr. TIAN JIN

Mrs. GE YUYUN

Mr. PAN ZHONG ZHOU

Cuba:

Mr. L. SOLA VILA

Mr. P. NUNEZ MOSQUERA

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. M. VEJVODA

Mr. A. CIMA

Egypt:

Mr. El S.A.R. EL REEDY

Mr. I.A. HASSAN

Mr. A.M. ABBAS

Ethiopia:

Mr. T. TERREFE

Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. F. DE LA GORCE

Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE

Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER

Mr. H. THIELICKE

Mr. F. SAYATZ

Mr. M. NOTZEL

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. H. WEGENER

Mr. F. ELBE

Mr. W.E. VON DEM HAGEN

Mr. J. PFIRSCHKE

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES

Mr. F. GADJA

Mr. T. TOTH

India:

Mr. M. DUBEY

Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia:

Mr. N.S. SUTRESNA

Mr. B. DARMOSUTANTO

Mr. I.H. WIRAAATMADJA

Mr. HARYOMATARAM

Mr. F. QASIM

Iran:

Mr. F. SHAHABI

Italy:

Mr. M. ALESSI

Mr. B. CABRAS

Mr. C.M. OLIVA

Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan:

Mr. R. IMAI
Mr. T. KAWAKITA
Mr. K. TANAKA
Mr. T. ARAI

Kenya:

Mr. D.D.C. DON NANJIRA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Mrs. Z. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO

Mongolia:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. L. ERDENCHULUUN
Mr. J. CHOINKHOR
Mr. S.O. BOLD

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Mr. A. SKALLI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

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Mr. F. VAN DONGEN
Mr. H. WAGENMAKERS
Mr. J. RAMAKER

Nigeria:

Mr. A.N.C. NWAOZOMUDOH
Mr. J.O. OBOH
Mr. L.O. AKINDELE
Mr. A.A. ADEDOJU
Miss I.E.C. UKEJE

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Mr. I. DATCU
Mr. T. MELESCANU
Mr. L. TOADER

Sri Lanka:

Mr. A.T. JAYAKODDY
Mr. H.M.G.S. PALIHAKKARA

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. C.L. HYLTIENIUS
Mr. G. EKHOIM
Mr. H. BERGLUND
Mr. J. LUNDIN
Mr. O. DAHLMAN
Mrs. A. LAU-ERIKSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELIAN
Mr. B.P. PROKOFIEV
Mr. V.M. GANJA
Mr. L.A. NAUMOV
Mr. M.F. TREPIKHALIN
Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV
Mr. Y.V. KOSTENKO
Mr. A.P. KOUTEPOV
Mr. V.A. KROKHA
Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN
Mr. G.N. VASHADZE

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE
Mr. L.J. MIDDLETON
Miss J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

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Mr. M.D. BUSBY
Mr. P. CORDEN
Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER
Mr. W. HECKROTTE
Mr. R.L. HORNE
Mr. J. MARTIN
Mr. R. MIKULAK

Venezuela:

Mr. O. GARCIA GARCIA

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. O. GNOK

Secretary of the Committee
on Disarmament and Personal
Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the
Committee on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 196th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Cuba, the German Democratic Republic, Sweden, Australia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Solá Vila.

Mr. SOLA VILA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Comrade Chairman, one of the items of highest priority among those proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament is that relating to the prevention of nuclear war, and my delegation proposes to express some views on it.

The prevention of nuclear war -- as a matter of absolute priority -- is mentioned in the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament in such a way as to leave no room for doubts or erroneous interpretations.

Paragraph 8 of the Document states: "While the final objective of the efforts of all States should continue to be general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the immediate goal" -- and I stress -- "the immediate goal is that of the elimination of the danger of a nuclear war and the implementation of measures to halt and reverse the arms race and clear the path towards lasting peace".

That statement was made in 1978, and since that time new systems of nuclear weapons have appeared and dangerous doctrines based on the use of such weapons have emerged or have been reasserted, with the result that that statement remains equally applicable today, if not more so.

However, it is not only in paragraph 8 of the Final Document that the prevention of nuclear war is mentioned. Paragraph 18 of the Document also points out that removing the threat of a world war -- as it explains immediately afterwards, a nuclear war -- is the most acute and urgent task of the present day.

Again, with reference to disarmament measures, paragraph 20 states that among such measures, those of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority. This theme recurs throughout the Final Document, and the idea is repeated, as a constant reminder, in paragraphs 56, 58 and so on.

When we recall, in addition to all the foregoing, that in the Concluding Document of the second special session devoted to disarmament which the United Nations General Assembly held only a few months ago, all States reaffirmed the validity of the Final Document of 1978, it is very difficult to understand why there are countries represented in the Committee on Disarmament which do not want the item on the prevention of nuclear war to be included on the agenda of this negotiating body.

Is the concern expressed by consensus -- and I repeat -- the concern expressed by consensus by the General Assembly in 1978 and reaffirmed in 1982 not justified? Are not the growth and improvements that have taken place in nuclear weapons and the

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appearance and ratification of doctrines of nuclear deterrence, limited nuclear war and winnable nuclear war, all based on the possible use of these weapons, more than sufficient for the Committee on Disarmament to start negotiations on this item without delay?

Whenever this question is raised at our meetings, we hear arguments to the effect that not only nuclear war but all wars should be prevented, and that conventional weapons have been used on countless occasions and have caused damage, destruction and death. We admit the logic of those arguments, but we cannot agree to their being used to minimize the importance and urgency of the prevention of a nuclear war, because of what this new use of nuclear weapons would mean.

It is enough to recall the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to be opposed to those who try to belittle the need to seek at once to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war. A number of documents have been submitted to the Committee on Disarmament on this subject and we are in a position to start negotiations with a view to adopting practical measures which will enable us to achieve that objective.

The parallel which some are trying to create between nuclear and conventional weapons is the more unacceptable in that those who are seeking to establish it are precisely those who have prevented and are still preventing the Committee on Disarmament from opening substantive negotiations on a general prohibition of nuclear tests or even from setting up a working group on the cessation of the nuclear arms race. There is too much of a coincidence in all this.

Furthermore, it is not only the United Nations General Assembly, at its 1978 special session which has called urgently for the prevention of nuclear war. Millions of people have staged marches in the major capitals of the world, as well as in front of the United Nations Headquarters in New York and have called, with a single voice, for the adoption of concrete measures to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war. This enormous mass movement deserves our respect and consideration, and the least we can do is to begin without delay the negotiations that are demanded of us.

Moreover, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries members of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting in Havana only a few days before the opening of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, called upon the General Assembly at that session to adopt urgent measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

Thus, the right of the item to appear on our agenda and our obligation to set up a working group to begin objective negotiations are based in the appeals which have been made by the most varied sectors.

We could quote a long list of the petitions received by the General Assembly on this item, including the replies of many Governments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations under resolution 36/81 B. I should, however, simply like to refer to some of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its last regular session.

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Resolution 37/78 I on the prevention of nuclear war, which was sponsored by a group of non-aligned countries, requests the Committee on Disarmament to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

Resolution 37/78 J on the non-use of nuclear weapons and prevention of nuclear war, which was put forward by the German Democratic Republic, expresses the hope that the nuclear-weapon States which have not yet done so will undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Lastly, resolution 37/100 on the World Disarmament Campaign, which was proposed by the United States of America, calls upon States, inter alia, to facilitate the flow of a broad range of information on disarmament matters and to encourage their citizens freely and publicly to express their views on disarmament questions.

But what action has been taken on all these resolutions? With respect to the first, there is a flat refusal to negotiate to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war, and we have not been allowed to include this item on our agenda; with respect to the second, a stubborn refusal to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons has become evident, while at the same time measures are being adopted to increase nuclear power and negotiate from positions of strength; and with respect to the third, public opinion, including that of that country's own citizens, who have clamoured for the attainment of these objectives, is being ignored.

Is not all this paradoxical?

We for our part, together with the other members of the Group of 21, have submitted document CD/341 which requests the inclusion in the agenda of a separate item on the prevention of nuclear war, and we have recommended the setting up of an ad hoc working group to begin negotiations on appropriate measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

We are gratified by the support which that document has received from the group of socialist countries, and we hope that the proposed negotiations can begin very soon, for the sake of all mankind.

Before concluding, I should like to introduce the document which we have made available to all delegations and transmitted to the secretariat for distribution as an official document, with a view to contributing to this Committee's work on the subject of chemical weapons -- the text in question will be or is being issued as document CD/349.

This document contains the report of the International Symposium on Herbicides and Defoliants in War, which was held in Ho Chi Minh City from 13 to 20 January this year with the participation of 160 scientists from 21 countries, including Cuba.

The conclusions of the report as regards what was essentially a chemical war waged with herbicides and defoliants in Viet Nam between 1961 and 1975 are of particular interest.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Herder.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Comrade Chairman, in the general statement I made on 8 February here, I declared that it was my delegation's intention to express our views in a more detailed manner on the items of the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament, in the course of this annual session. My statement today will be devoted to the item on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The German Democratic Republic continues to attach high priority to the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. In the recent Prague Declaration my country, together with the other Warsaw Treaty member States, advocated that this Committee accelerate the elaboration of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

In my statement delivered on 8 February my delegation has already expressed some ideas on how this goal can be achieved. Today I would like to elaborate on our basic approach to the work of the Committee on Disarmament in the field of chemical weapons.

In the view of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic as well as many others, it is now high time for the Committee to proceed to actual drafting work with regard to a chemical weapons convention. All prerequisites for such an endeavour exist.

Firstly, we have before us quite a number of comprehensive proposals with regard to a chemical weapons convention. Let me only mention the documents tabled by the socialist countries, Japan, the United Kingdom, the joint documents by the USSR and the United States as well as the Soviet "Basic provisions".

The papers submitted in recent years by the consecutive chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons have been most helpful for advancing our work. The valuable "Views of the Chairman on a chemical weapons convention" submitted last year by Ambassador Sujka (CD/333) deserve particular praise. The same applies to the interesting papers reflecting the work done in the contact groups set up by Ambassador Sujka (CD/334, Annex). Now also the views of the United States on a chemical weapons ban have been tabled.

Consequently, there is enough material to be processed in drafting the convention.

Secondly, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons which was agreed upon last year and to which, after all, every delegation gave its consent, provides for the elaboration of a convention. Thus, the work of the Committee on Disarmament, and in particular of its Working Group, can no longer be limited to a mere systematization of views and positions or lengthy discussions on certain questions. Now, the Committee should really start discharging its political negotiating role concerning a chemical weapons convention. It stands to reason that negotiations entail more than just reflections on working papers tabled in this Committee.

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Thirdly, the demand to proceed with actual drafting work also takes into account the time factor. Each day spent on discussion may only lead us further away from the aim of a convention. While we are spending our time on discussions, a new generation of chemical weapons — the binary weapons — is being introduced into military arsenals. It is likely to give the whole chemical weapons problem a new dimension. This is also a challenge for the Committee, where the tendency can be felt to involve it ever more in a growing tangle of technical material and ideas, sometimes of no or only marginal importance to an international political and legal instrument.

Fourthly, questions which are still open could be overcome in the course of the drafting of the convention, in a serious and systematic negotiating process. To mention only one methodological example, I would like to refer to the personal experience I gathered during the drafting of the ENMOD Convention which took place in the predecessor of this Committee in 1976. This agreement was then drafted within quite a short period of time, during which intensive efforts were undertaken by delegations and all open questions were solved in the course of the negotiating process.

Having stated the case for drafting work one might well ask how this should be done. As far as the negotiating forum is concerned, one possibility could be to use the instrument provided by contact groups in a more systematic way. One could think about setting up such a group for all questions connected with the scope of a future convention. It could also tackle the issues connected with stockpiles and facilities, perhaps even the question of declarations. Another group could deal in a comprehensive way with all verification matters. Thus, we favour an approach which would follow the actual structure of the future convention. We have strong doubts about the usefulness of an approach aiming at a priority discussion of certain activities — stockpile destruction, for instance — and dealing with them in a separate, isolated way. This could perhaps lead to interesting scientific and technical debates, but would obviously lead us away from drafting work on a chemical weapons convention. With regard to the working method, we would prefer the use of brackets. In this way we could proceed on the basis of the structure envisaged for the convention and narrow down differences of opinion concerning questions of detail. This, of course, presupposes a readiness to compromise, to engage in real negotiations.

Sometimes we are told that the main problem of a chemical weapons convention would be that of international verification. We do not overlook the fact that in this field different views still exist. But this is the case with other areas as well, as has been shown by the United States document which I have already mentioned. So, how can one agree to the proposal to negotiate first an acceptable verification and compliance framework before drafting an actual treaty text? This would contravene common practice in international law. Such a position would amount to putting the cart before the horse. It could endlessly postpone actual

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disarmament, as historical experience shows. Besides, paragraph 31 of the Final Document states clearly that the forms and modalities of verification depend upon and should be determined by the purposes, scope and nature of the agreement. Moreover, should we now in the field of chemical weapons take the same dangerous approach as we were asked to do last year with regard to a comprehensive test ban? Should it be a rule from now on, first to agree on a verification system which would be acceptable to one delegation, and then, perhaps, start working on the disarmament agreement?

Experience has shown that it is not a serious approach to expect one side to accept the demands of the other side on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Here again we should bear in mind paragraph 31 of the Final Document which provides that verification measures should be satisfactory to all parties concerned. So, our aim cannot be absolute verification or a verification system which might be perfect and not leave any doubts or risks. It is common knowledge that taking into account the complexity of the modern chemical industry, we have to live with certain risks. What is necessary, however, is a system which creates the necessary confidence and ensures that the relevant agreement is observed by all parties.

In this we share the view, expressed two years ago in the Committee on Disarmament by the Indian delegation: "Let us not pursue verification procedures which may be 'intrusive' but not necessarily effective in ensuring compliance. There is a tendency in the Working Group to assume that on-site inspection or other intrusive methods of verification necessarily ensure compliance. When we are dealing with as complex a field as chemicals, we cannot be so sure. Our debate should not concentrate merely on whether or not to have on-site inspection. Rather we should try to determine what methods of verification are (i) feasible and (ii) optimal in ensuring compliance." (CD/PV.142, p. 31).

On several occasions my delegation has outlined its basic approach to verification. In the Working Group we have expressed our viewpoint about a verification system consisting of a combination of national and international procedures, including different kinds of systematic international on-site inspections and inspections by challenge.

It is the aspect of combination that we miss in the United States document. Virtually nothing is said concerning implementation and monitoring at the national level, that is, on the level of the States parties which, after all, would be responsible for carrying out the obligations of the convention and overseeing national enterprises and other bodies in order to guarantee compliance. This is common practice in international law and has been recognized by many delegations in this Committee. I would only like to refer to working papers CD/203 tabled by the Netherlands, CD/167 and CD/313 by Canada, CD/CW/CRP.35 by Australia and CD/326 by the Federal Republic of Germany. Our approach does not imply a "confrontation" of national and international verification. They should be considered two sides of the same medal. It certainly does not mean the establishment

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of a so-called self-verification. In calling for sound national procedures we start from a purely practical viewpoint, since a well-functioning national implementation and monitoring system is a sine qua non for international verification. Where should the consultative committee send the inspectors, if there is no point of contact at the national level which keeps track of national activities concerning the implementation of the convention? Who should keep the records to provide the consultative committee with the required information?

In this connection we would like to refer to the experience gathered by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The safeguards applied by this Agency are largely based on national systems of accounting and control.

Furthermore, I would like to mention the national experience of my country in the chemical field. The improved Law on the Handling of Poisons adopted five years ago, for example, provides for a full inventory of all **poisonous** substances, which applies to all branches of the national economy and covers the whole process, beginning with the production and ending with the disposal of poisons. A system of national agencies oversees the implementation of the law. To our knowledge, similar laws exist in other countries as well.

It is the intention of my delegation to express at a later stage of our work more detailed ideas with regard to the co-operation between the national and international bodies of the verification systems.

In our view it is exactly the co-operation aspect which counts, namely, activities based on mutual trust, not an atmosphere of distrust. Moreover, suspicions should be eliminated by verification activities. But how can this be achieved when even the declarations of parties who voluntarily entered the agreement are not trusted and should be verified?

In the course of the Committee's work on a chemical weapons convention we have seen, like many other delegations, that the problems connected with banning chemical weapons are, indeed, quite complicated. One particular reason is that it is sometimes rather difficult to draw a line between what is connected with chemical weapons and what does not belong to it. That is true of chemicals forming the basis for chemical weapons, as well as of facilities producing these chemicals.

Such difficulties arise not only with regard to the scope of a chemical weapons convention but also concerning verification of compliance. These problems are further complicated by differences in the organization of the chemical industry in various countries. The production of binary chemical weapons and their introduction into military arsenals will bring about serious additional problems. This "latest achievement" in chemical weaponry would be more closely connected with the commercial chemical industry than the so-called unitary chemical weapons. This applies both to the chemicals involved and to the facilities concerned.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

We share the concern of many delegations about this dangerous development and join their request that the problem should be carefully studied and solved on a priority basis. A situation has to be avoided where attention is concentrated only on the declaration and destruction of facilities for the production of traditional chemical weapons, while the same is not sufficiently guaranteed for the most modern chemical weapons.

In view of this situation, we should look for a solution which would eliminate this imbalance and bring positions on the timing of the declarations for chemical weapons production facilities closer together.

A possible solution could be to elaborate specific measures with regard to production facilities for binary weapons, namely, to declare their location and to destroy them earlier than other facilities. Such a procedure would give all other States parties to the convention confidence that this new kind of chemical weapon does not exist any more. This approach would, in fact, not place those who have binary weapons in an unequal situation. On the contrary, it would improve conditions for elaborating and implementing the convention. Therefore, my delegation proposes that the convention provide for the declaration of the location of production facilities for binary chemical weapons during the first year after its entry into force. They should be destroyed in the course of the first two years.

The Committee has before it a working paper containing the final summary report of the International Symposium on Herbicides and Defoliants in War: The Long-Term Effects on Man and Nature, held in Ho Chi Minh City from 13 to 20 January 1983, which has just been introduced by Ambassador Solá Vila. Scientists of my country participated in this Conference. We highly appreciate its results. There is no doubt that the results of this symposium are directly linked with our efforts to elaborate a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. They therefore deserve our special attention. Proceeding from this consideration, we would like to suggest that you, Comrade Chairman, should hold consultations with a view to inviting representatives from Viet Nam to explain in a more detailed way the results of the above-mentioned symposium.

Concluding my remarks, I would like to express the readiness of my delegation to offer in the Working Group on Chemical Weapons additional comments on questions referring to the drafting of the convention.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Lidgard.

Mr. LIDGARD (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, I have the honour to introduce today document CD/348, which contains the fifteenth progress report of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. The Ad Hoc Group met from 7 to 18 February 1983. Experts from 20 countries took part in the session. Unfortunately the start of the work of the Ad Hoc Group was delayed for three days owing to differences in the Committee on Disarmament on the procedure for the election of a new Chairman.

On 10 February 1983, however, the Ad Hoc Group unanimously elected Dr. Ola Dahlman of Sweden as its Chairman.

The Ad Hoc Group considered the draft chapters for its third formal report on international co-operative measures to assist States to monitor a nuclear test ban.

In preparing its report the Ad Hoc Group noted that significant technical developments have taken place in the past few years with regard to seismograph facilities worldwide. The many advantages of digitally recording seismograph systems are now widely recognized, and in consequence many such systems have been installed.

It is a continued concern that few high-sensitive stations have been established in the southern hemisphere. The Group considers it essential that more high-quality stations be established in that part of the world, especially in Africa and South America.

National investigations have shown that Level 1 data extraction imposes a heavy work-load when carried out manually. Promising results have been achieved using automatic procedures, which would greatly facilitate such data extractions, but it is recognized that this is a complex problem.

As in the past, the Ad Hoc Group enjoyed excellent co-operation with WMO and plans further experimental transmission over the WMO network. In order to obtain full efficiency in such a transmission this Committee, through a letter from its Chairman to the Secretary-General of WMO, had requested WMO to make the necessary arrangements for the Ad Hoc Group's transmission on a regular basis. The WMO representative informed the Ad Hoc Group that the Commission for basic systems of WMO, at its eighth session, held in Geneva from 31 January to 11 February 1983, had adopted a recommendation which will be submitted for confirmation to the WMO Congress in May 1983. The Commission was of the opinion that the Global Telecommunication System (GTS) should be used for the global exchange of seismic Level 1 data and that the implementation date should be 1 December 1983. In accordance with this positive decision, which is a most significant step forward, the Group received a proposal for a new experiment concerning the exchange and analysis of Level 1 data, using the WMO/GTS, to be held after WMO has completed the arrangements for the transmission of such data on a regular basis.

As to the exchange and use of so-called Level 2 data (i.e. of whole records), recent advances in computer and telecommunication equipment have made it possible to exchange, without much effort, many more Level 2 data than was foreseen in the two formal reports of the Ad Hoc Group which were submitted in 1978 and 1979. There is a general agreement in the Group that all authorized requests for Level 2 data should be fulfilled; but different views exist as to the amount of data expected to be exchanged.

(Mr. Lidgard, Sweden)

Experimental data centres have been established in some countries, and some large-scale experiments have been conducted to test and develop procedures for data handling and analysis.

Some of these experiments are aimed at developing standardized processing routines to be used at international data centres.

Other national investigations presented to the Group have also shown that as a result of recent technical advances, the application of agreed analysis procedures to Level 2 data for the estimation of the origin time, location, magnitude and depth of seismic events at data centres is now technically possible. So far, however, no agreement in the Group has been reached on the assessment of the results of these national investigations with regard to their relevance to the envisaged global system, in particular at international data centres.

The Group decided to compile what might be called operational manuals containing detailed instructions for station operation, Level 1 data extraction and exchange, Level 2 data exchange and international data centre operation. These documents, which will be annexed to the third report, will be of great value for the testing and implementation of the global system.

Despite the unfortunate delay in the start of its fifteenth session, the Group envisages submitting its third report before the end of the 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament.

The Ad Hoc Group proposes that its next meeting be held from 11 to 22 July 1983.

With these words, Mr. Chairman, I formally propose that the Committee takes note of the progress report contained in document CD/348.

Finally, I want to say that the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts, Dr. Ola Dahlman, is prepared to answer questions, if any, in the same manner as has been customary in the past.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Sadleir.

Mr. SADLEIR (Australia): Mr. Chairman, the Australian delegation welcomes the fact that the progress report of the fifteenth session of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts has been presented today in the form of CD/348. My delegation believes that the Committee on Disarmament should begin to focus more acutely on the work done by this Group, and to examine its medium and long-term relevance to the work of the Committee itself.

The report submitted to us today is once again as significant for what it does not say as for what is recorded in it. Two sessions ago the Group of Scientific Experts produced a bland report, namely document CD/260. That report disappointed many delegations, as is reflected in the interventions of 24 March 1982. Fortunately the next progress report, i.e. document CD/318, did reflect differences of view and problems to be tackled, and was informative. This time, however, we note that the report says very little indeed. This is not because there was little to say. On the contrary: the first draft of the report in fact contained seven detailed pages. Now we have a rather odd report which does not even record the fact that a new Chairman of the Group, namely, Dr. Ola Dahlman of Sweden, was unanimously elected during the course of the fifteenth session.

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

There is, of course, a reason why this report is a lowest common denominator report, which does not provide much useful information to the Committee. It is that some delegations are insisting that the Group of Scientific Experts operate with a large question mark, or, perhaps better, a Sword of Damocles, over its head. This raises some important questions which the Committee must soon address.

The Group's mandate is to consider international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events, so as to facilitate the monitoring of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We often hear in this Committee the view expressed that the technical aspects of CTBT verification are basically resolved. The distinguished ambassador of the Soviet Union, for example, in his statement of 17 February, emphasized this point and illustrated it with a quotation from an article by two expert seismologists in the October 1982 issue of the Scientific American. The article is indeed authoritative, very detailed and relevant, but its central theme is that networks of seismic instruments could monitor a total test ban with high reliability, and it outlines how this network might be constituted. The article notes, as delegations to this Committee have done, the political dimension, but it devotes its energy to the technical situation: this, of course, is what the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts does.

Even if a CTBT, and its verification in particular, must have a political dimension, that is not a sufficient reason for implying that little else that is useful can go on meanwhile. What if the political dimension were to change? What if technical progress facilitated a change in political attitudes -- as happened for example in the context of strategic arms talks through the development of non-intrusive forms of national technical means of verification? Will we in this Committee be in a position to speak knowledgeably about the scope of CTB and its verification if we assume that technical issues are both static and sufficient? This would, in my view, be complacency.

The report submitted today does have one useful paragraph reflecting differences of views. It is paragraph 10 which refers to a proposal for a new experiment on the exchange of data using the global telecommunications system of the World Meteorological Organization. This would follow up an experiment last year when synthetic data, that is a hypothetical list of seismic events, were transmitted to Australia, Japan and Britain from prototype international data centres in Sweden and the United States. The proposal is to move out of hypotheses into the world of actual events relayed from centres whose methods have been modified and improved in the light of the many unexpected occurrences in last year's experiment. There is no doubt that this is a worthwhile proposal, bringing nearer the day when one might be able to say that the practical questions related to monitoring a CTB treaty have been resolved. If the World Meteorological Organization can decide favourably on co-operating again in this area then the proposed experiment ought to go ahead: the Committee on Disarmament as a whole would be the beneficiary.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Issraelyan.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Comrade Chairman, the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons occupies an important place in the attainment of the historic goal of the cessation of the arms race and the lessening of the threat of war. The Warsaw Treaty member States,

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in their Political Declaration adopted recently in Prague, called upon all States to give a new impetus to negotiations, including those conducted within the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, in order to speed up the elaboration of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

This approach of the socialist countries to the problem of the prohibition of chemical weapons is shared also by many other members of our Committee.

As the deliberations in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons at the beginning of this year showed, the most important obstacle hindering the completion of work on the provisions relating to the scope of the future convention is the lack of agreement on whether the convention, in spite of the existence of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, should in some or other way envisage the prohibition of the use of this type of weapon of mass destruction. In our statement today we would like to dwell upon this question.

I would like to recall that various points of view have been expressed on the question of confirming the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, and different ways of resolving the issue were proposed.

In particular a number of delegations, including the delegation of the Soviet Union, have expressed apprehension that the duplication in the future convention of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons established by the Geneva Protocol some 60 years ago might be to the detriment of this authoritative international treaty. In this connection the delegations deemed it necessary to display the maximum prudence and care and to try to solve this problem by stressing in the preamble of the future convention the importance of the Geneva Protocol and including in the convention an article stating that none of its provisions should be interpreted as in any way limiting or diminishing the undertakings of States under the Geneva Protocol and certain other international agreements.

On the other hand some delegations have maintained that since what we are concerned with is the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, then it would be advisable to include in the convention also a provision on the prohibition of the use of such weapons, so indicating the completeness of the scope of the prohibition.

Other proposals too, have been made for the solution of this problem, in particular, the inclusion in the convention of a provision or provisions extending the mechanism of verifications envisaged by the convention for unclear situations to cases of the use of chemical weapons. Ideas have even been put forward, although not here in the Committee on Disarmament, to the effect that the strengthening of the regime of the non-use of chemical weapons could be achieved through procedures suitable rather for the adoption of resolutions than for the elaboration of effective measures in the sphere of the limitation of the arms race and disarmament, and which would have practically no links either with the 1925 Geneva Protocol or with the future convention.

I am thinking of resolution 37/98 D of the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. Soviet representatives have already had occasion to state their basic attitude to this resolution which provides, contrary to the principles generally recognized in international law for the drafting and review of international agreements, that the elaboration of a mechanism for the verification

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of compliance with the Geneva Protocol should be carried out not by States parties to the Protocol but by all the States Members of the United Nations, including, therefore, States which are not parties to the Geneva Protocol. Moreover, it is proposed that the adoption of the mechanism for the verification of compliance with the Geneva Protocol should be carried out, not after the reconciliation of the various viewpoints in the course of negotiations and on the basis of consensus, as is always done at disarmament talks, but through simple voting. It is clear that should we follow this resolution an unprecedented situation would be created. In short, one cannot but see that resolution 37/98 D, which was supported, by the way, by only approximately half of the States parties to the Geneva Protocol, can bring nothing but harm, and of course it will not solve the problem of strengthening the regime of the non-use of chemical weapons.

As you see, quite a number of proposals have been made on the question of the non-use of chemical weapons, but up to the present time no mutually acceptable solution has been found. It is clear that the time has come to tackle this problem seriously, the more so as, in spite of the fact that the use of chemical weapons was prohibited de jure long ago, de facto such weapons have been used, and more than once. We have no desire to turn back now to this unattractive page of history, but since we are on the subject, distinguished delegates, let us dot all the "i's".

First of all we would like to emphasize very firmly the positive significance of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the parties to which number more than 100 States. Whatever attempts are made by some critics to find weak points in this instrument, with references to its lack of this or that provision, its brevity, etc., the main thing is that the Geneva Protocol placed an effective barrier in the way of the use of one of the most barbarous types of weapons. The Geneva Protocol, as we have already pointed out, has become an irrevocable part of international law. Given the lack of a comprehensive system of international disarmament treaties and agreements, it is even more valuable as a corner-stone for the creation of such a system.

Even the members of the fascist bloc which unleashed in 1939 the most bloody, merciless and inhumane war in the history of mankind, did not dare to make large-scale use of chemical weapons in combats at the front during that war. Although they prepared to use chemical weapons, they were to a large extent constrained by the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the unswerving determination of the major States of anti-Hitlerist coalition severely to punish the fascists for any attempt to violate the Protocol and use chemical weapons.

In this connection it is interesting to recall that in the spring of 1942 the Soviet Government informed Mr. Churchill, the British Prime Minister, of the possibility of the use by the Hitlerites of poison gases against the Soviet Union. In this connection the British Prime Minister informed the head of the Soviet Government, Stalin, in March 1942, of the decision of the British Government to treat any use of poison gas against the USSR exactly as if it were directed against England. "I have been building up an immense store of gas bombs for discharge from aircraft", Churchill wrote to Stalin, "and we shall not hesitate to use these over all suitable objectives in Western Germany from the moment that your armies and people are assaulted in this way." The stern warning of the heads of the anti-Hitlerite coalition States had its effect, although it has to be said that

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the fascist troops occasionally used chemical gases. In 1942, for example, they were used in the Crimea in the course of military operations against Soviet troops and civilians defending themselves in the Adzhimushky quarry.

There were reports of the use of chemical weapons by Japanese troops in China on a number of occasions. President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated on 5 June 1942: "Authoritative reports are reaching this Government of the use by Japanese armed forces in various localities of China of poisonous or noxious gases. I desire to make it unmistakably clear that if Japan persists in this inhuman form of warfare against China or against any other of the United Nations, such action will be regarded by this Government as though taken against the United States, and retaliation in kind and in full measure will be meted out. We shall be prepared to enforce complete retribution. Upon Japan will rest the responsibility."

It is known that chemical weapons were used by the Italian fascists in their aggression against Ethiopia in 1935-1936 and in some other cases.

However, since the entry into force of the Geneva Protocol, poisonous chemical substances have been most widely used -- on a truly massive scale -- by the American armed forces in their aggression against Viet Nam. About 100,000 tons of various chemical and poisonous agents were used against the people of Viet Nam, including several hundred kilogrammes of the most terrible poison -- dioxin. A few dozen grammes of this agent dissolved in water are enough to eliminate the entire population of a city with several millions of inhabitants. Not only did these actions of the United States damage almost half the cultivable lands and tropical forests of Viet Nam, but in addition many hundreds of thousands of people became their victims. Those who survived have experienced the same genetic changes as the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A few days ago the Vice-President of the United States pointed out in this room that apart from the provisions of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, "there is an even broader moral prohibition against the use of these weapons". It is pertinent to ask how, in the light of this statement, we should qualify the actions of the American troops in Viet Nam for more than a decade. Some may tell us that this is a matter of past history and that it is not worth while dwelling upon it now when we are conducting business-like negotiations aimed at the elaboration of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. We do not share this opinion, because the use of American chemical weapons in Viet Nam is by no means a closed question. In this connection we would like to draw your attention to the symposium held in Ho Chi Minh City which was devoted to the study of the consequences of the use of chemical weapons in Viet Nam. We believe that all participants in the negotiations should seriously and carefully study the documents on that symposium.

There is another aspect to the question of strengthening the regime of the non-use of chemical weapons. A good half of the States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, when adhering to it, made reservations in which they reserved their right to consider themselves free of their commitments in the event of the use of chemical weapons against them. At the same time, however, some States -- the present members of NATO -- have since broadened their reservations to such an extent as to exclude a number of categories of chemicals completely from the prohibition as regards themselves. For example, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Canada have in

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the past declared that they do not consider CS and other such gases and "riot control" agents, i.e. the so-called harmful chemicals, as subject to prohibition under the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The United States has also left room for itself to use harmful chemicals and not only for police purposes but also even for certain military purposes.

In these conditions the Soviet Government, having carefully weighed all the circumstances connected with the question of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons and guided by the desire to speed up the elaboration of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of such weapons, has decided to agree with the proposal of a number of non-aligned and neutral States members of the Committee on Disarmament for the inclusion in the future convention of a provision prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. The Soviet Government considers that the procedures for the verification of compliance with the provision on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons should envisage the use of the verification mechanism of the convention, including on-site inspection on a voluntary basis.

In what manner might this new Soviet proposal be reflected in the text of the future convention?

First of all, its preamble should forcefully emphasize the great importance of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. By prohibiting the development and production of chemical weapons and the retention of stockpiles of such weapons, the convention would in fact eliminate the whole class of chemical weapons, thus providing a serious material foundation for the Protocol.

The convention would, further, contain a provision stating that nothing in it should be interpreted as in any way limiting or diminishing the obligations assumed by any State under the Geneva Protocol. In other words, the future convention would be organically incorporated into the fabric of already existing international agreements, not destroying, but on the contrary, strengthening it. Should any State not be a party to the future convention, it would in no way be released from its obligations under the Geneva Protocol. As far as the parties to the convention are concerned, they would be bound by the obligation not to use chemical weapons under both international agreements at the same time. There is nothing wrong with that.

Of course, it would be necessary to amend the wording of the main prohibition contained in the Soviet "Basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction". This should read as follows:

"Each State Party to the Convention undertakes never, under any circumstances, to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain, transfer or use chemical weapons and undertakes to destroy or divert to permitted purposes the accumulated stocks of such weapons and to destroy or dismantle facilities which provide capacities for the production of chemical weapons."

Lastly, the section of the convention devoted to verification should envisage appropriate procedures for the verification of compliance with the provision on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons.

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We believe that the approach we have proposed will provide for an extremely clear and truly comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, including the prohibition of its use, ensure the verification of that prohibition and eliminate many difficulties contained in other approaches. In particular, if we start walking on thin ice looking for the boundaries between the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in warfare on the basis of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the prohibition proposed in document CD/343, on the use of such weapons "in any circumstances where use is not already prohibited by the 1925 Geneva Protocol", then we shall be faced with a virtually impossible task. And it is not excluded that we might merely damage the regime of non-use. We shall not even talk about the serious consequences that would result from attempts to solve the problem outside the framework of the convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Our delegation, in putting forward this new important proposal of the Soviet Government concerning the strengthening of the regime of non-use of chemical weapons, wishes to emphasize that the Soviet Union will continue to play a constructive part in the solution of the problem of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States, Ambassador Fields.

Mr. FIELDS (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, the United States delegation would like to thank Dr. Ola Dahlman for his report, and through you to compliment him and the entire Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts for their efforts.

I wish to make a few brief remarks concerning the work of the Ad Hoc Group. But first allow me to refer to the progress report, three substantive aspects of which deserve comment.

First, I am delighted to learn that the World Meteorological Organization's Commission for Basic Systems has recommended that the WMO's Global Telecommunication System be made available on a regular basis for the continuing work of the Ad Hoc Group in exchanging Level 1 data. This recommendation is pursuant to the request made by the Committee on Disarmament last summer, and we are pleased that our request was favourably received.

Secondly, the report reflects, in paragraph 10, the noting by some experts that a new proposal has been placed before the Ad Hoc Group for an experiment which would exercise the Global Telecommunication System in the exchange of actual Level 1 seismic data. The United States is one of the co-sponsors of this proposal, which would include the analysis of the exchanged data and the further development and testing of procedures to be used at international data centres.

Thirdly, the Ad Hoc Group has reported to us that it anticipates submitting to the Committee its third report before the end of our session this year. In practical terms, this means that we can expect the report at the end of the two-week meeting of the Group in July. My delegation looks forward to receiving this report, and will be prepared to discuss it fully, as well as to make any necessary determinations regarding future useful work that the Group can undertake.

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The work of the Ad Hoc Group during this session seems to have been excessively fraught with problems. In particular, we have noted difficulties, which arose at a very late hour, seemingly calculated to block even the submission of this progress report. We hope these events are not a prelude to difficulties regarding the important future work which lies before this Group.

As is well known, my delegation welcomed the unanimous election of Dr. Dahlman as the Ad Hoc Group's new Chairman. He is indeed a worthy successor to the late Dr. Ulf Ericsson, who led this Group from its inception with unique skill. As other delegates here will recall, this election was, according to the Group's own procedures, without preconditions. Consequently, I was more than slightly concerned to learn from the United States experts that, in the preparation of the progress report, other experts and representatives in the Group sought to establish such preconditions and to create a linkage between Dr. Dahlman's election and their own national views. My delegation regrets this unfortunate and unwarranted attempt to introduce extraneous issues into the on-going technical work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts. If delegations have substantive views regarding the future work of this Group, they should make those views known in a straightforward manner and the Committee can discuss these issues.

In fact, it would not be premature for the Committee to begin now informal discussions as to how best to utilize the Group after the submission of its third report. In this way, all preliminary views can be aired and debated well before the report is submitted, so that the Committee can take further appropriate action in the latter part of the summer.

As I have stated in past interventions concerning this matter, we believe that the work of the Ad Hoc Group has, and should continue to have, an important role to play in the vital area of developing international capabilities applicable to the verification of a nuclear test ban. In his address on 4 February, Vice-President Bush also stressed our view of the importance of the work of this Group. My Government fully supports the efforts of the Ad Hoc Group and will continue to do so for so long as they prove useful. It is our firm view that these efforts are useful, and should continue to be so.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the United States for his statement.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other representative wish to take the floor?

I intend to hold tomorrow, Wednesday, at 3.30 p.m., an informal meeting at which I would wish to raise the question of the agenda and the programme of work. Is there any objection? I see none.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: At the request of certain members of the Committee I shall be holding a very short informal meeting immediately after this plenary meeting. At that meeting I would merely wish to say a few words.

The next plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 24 February at 10.30 a.m.