

COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.201
3 March 1983
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIRST PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 7 March 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. A. SKALLI

(Morocco)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria:

Mr. A. TAFFAR

Mr. C. LAOUAR

Argentina:

Mr. J.C. CARASALES

Mr. R. GARCIA MORITAN

Australia:

Mr. R. STEELE

Mr. T. FINDLAY

Belgium:

Mr. A. ONKELINX

Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil:

Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA

Mr. S. QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. TELLALOV

Mr. B. GRINBERG

Mr. P. POPCHEV

Mr. C. PRAMOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

U TIN KYAW HLAING

U THAN TUN

Canada:

Mr. G.R. SKINNER

Mr. M.C. HAMBLIN

China:

Mr. LI LUYE

Mr. TIAN JIN

Mr. P. ZHENGIANG

Mr. P. JUSHENG

Mr. YU ZHONGZHOU

Cuba:

Mr. P. MOSQUERA

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. M. VEJVODA

Mr. A. CIMA

Mr. J. JIRUSEK

Egypt:

Mr. EL S.A.R. EL REEDY

Mr. I.A. HASSAN

Miss W. BASSIM

Mr. 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. ROHR

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES

Mr. F. GADJA

Mr. T. TOTH

India:

Mr. M. KUMAR

Indonesia:

Mr. N. WISNOEMOERTI

Mrs. P. RAMADHAN

Mr. I.H. WIRAATMADJA

Mr. HARYOMATARAN

Mr. F. QASIM

Iran:

Mr. F. SHAHABI SIRJANI

Italy:

Mr. M. ALESSI

Mr. B. CABRAS

Mr. C.M. OLIVA

Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan:

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

Kenya:

Mr. D.C.C. DON NANJIRA

Mexico:

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

Mongolia:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. S. BOLD
Mr. O. CHIMIDREGZEN

Morocco:

Mr. A. SKALLI
Mr. S.M. RAHHALI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands:

Mr. J. RAMAKER
Mr. R.J. AKKERMAN

Nigeria:

Mr. A.N.C. NWAOZOMUDOH
Mr. J.O. OBOH
Mr. L.O. AKINDELE
Mr. A.A. ADEPOJU
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Pakistan:

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Mr. G. CZEMPINSKI

Romania:

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. EKHOLM

Mr. H. BERGLUND

Mr. J. LUNDIN

Mrs. A. LAU-ERIKSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
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Mr. B.P. PROKOFIEV

Mr. G. VORONTZOV

Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV

Mr. Y.V. KOSTENKO

Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN

Mr. V.M. TATARNIKOV

Mr. G.N. VASHADZE

United Kingdom:

Mr. L.J. MIDDLETON

Miss J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

Mr. M.D. BUSHBY

Mr. P. CORDON

Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER

Mr. W. HECKROTTE

Mr. J.J. HOGAN

Mr. R.L. HORNE

Mr. J. MARTIN

Mr. J. LEONARD

Venezuela:

Mr. A. OLIVIER

Mr. T.L. RUBIO

Mr. O. GARCIA GARCIA

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

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

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

In one case it proved possible to achieve something which was received with general approval and is constantly cited as an example to be followed in other cases: the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, whose architect is among us today.

The dangers inherent in a nuclear war are the background against which the various paragraphs of the Final Document were drafted, and in the work of the Committee on Disarmament nuclear matters are of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the priority and urgency attached to these questions in the Final Document and in the unanimous opinion of all the peoples of the world have had no practical consequence whatever so far as this Committee is concerned. All we have had are talks, informal conversations, exchanges of views, which have not even been properly reflected in records or official documents. We cannot even put an item of such importance as the prevention of nuclear war on the agenda of our Committee because of the opposition of a few States which do not appear to understand that this question is important for the survival of all.

The subject of nuclear weapons is still taboo and cannot be talked about in multilateral disarmament negotiations. And this will continue to be the case so long as this instrument of mass destruction remains solely in the arsenals of a certain few powers which use such weapons directly or indirectly wherever they wish to wield power, and deploy them with impunity as soon as they consider their areas of influence, their colonial dominions, their lines of communication or any of their important interests, as they perceive them, threatened.

The conflict in the South Atlantic in which my country was recently involved offers evidence of direct relevance to subjects that are constantly recurring in our debates. In my statement on 10 February last I said: "... the undeniable use of nuclear weapons in the South Atlantic conflict necessitates serious and profound reflection on this question and on the real validity and significance of nuclear-weapon-free zones".

The Argentine delegation would like now to put before you certain ideas and comments based on what happened in the South Atlantic. We do not wish to bring a bilateral conflict into this Committee or to formulate charges and accusations. There are other forums for that, and these matters have been raised there with all due firmness.

Soon after the beginning of the South Atlantic conflict, reports began to appear in the international press, from reliable sources, that there were nuclear weapons aboard ships of the fleet which the United Kingdom had sent to the South Atlantic. Reasons were suggested as to why these weapons were on board those ships and at the same time, as was only to be expected, given the possible implications of the fact, some began to put questions in that connection to the only authority in a position to clear up the mystery, the Government of the United Kingdom. Such questions were also put repeatedly in the British Parliament and in United Nations bodies and especially the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The replies given in the United Kingdom Parliament, in both Houses, were always the same, in terms identical or similar to those used, for example, by the Government spokesman at the meeting of the House of Commons on 18 October 1982: "It would not be in the interests of national security to depart from the longstanding practice, observed by successive governments, neither to confirm nor to deny the presence or absence of nuclear weapons in any particular place at any particular time". In other words, this logical and well justified question was left unanswered.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I declare open the 201st plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Argentina, Sweden, France and Romania.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Carasales.

Mr. CARASALES (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, in my statement today I shall refer to nuclear weapons and their connection with recent experiences of my country that are, we believe, pertinent to the consideration of various subjects that fall within the competence of this Committee.

It is to repeat once again something that is obvious to say that nuclear weapons, from the moment they first appeared on the face of the earth in 1945, brought about a fundamental change in the bases on which international relations had up to then developed. Concepts such as security, the balance of power, neutrality or non-participation in conflicts and many others acquired new meaning and in some cases virtually lost the meaning they had and remained words without real content. At the same time, the destructive power of the new weapons, which have undergone constant improvement, created the real possibility of a holocaust likely to endanger the very survival of the human race. To this qualitatively new situation was added the fact that an extremely small number of powers, those which possessed nuclear weapons, became the arbiters of the future of mankind.

From the very beginning, this new context to be borne in mind in all international actions, and the possibility of a nuclear catastrophe, caused concern not only to world public opinion and outstanding leaders of science and culture and even official representatives but also to governments which must shape the future of their people in a world in which power relations have altered radically and in which events take place in the shadow of a threat without precedent in history.

All attempts to control and contain this tremendous destructive capacity have failed. Certain partial measures of disarmament, if indeed there has been any real disarmament, have nevertheless left untouched the nuclear might of the major powers and the alliances they lead. It could even be said that these measures have to some extent contributed to consolidating the privileged position of five States which can flaunt their nuclear arsenals without let or hindrance. In three cases with which we are all familiar, the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, that is, the possibility of using nuclear weapons, is at the basis of the security policies of the three States in question.

The international community, rightly and deeply concerned at this alarming situation, has tried time and again to find ways of removing or at any rate reducing the risks of a nuclear war, which would be fatal for all. Various formulas have been proposed: the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon countries by the nuclear-weapon States, the total prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the freezing of the production of nuclear weapons and fissionable material, a general undertaking not to use nuclear weapons or not to be the first to use them, specific measures of nuclear disarmament, and other possible methods which are constantly being discussed and upheld.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

In United Nations bodies also, the charges made by Argentina and other Latin American countries remained unanswered. The presence of nuclear weapons aboard ships of the British South Atlantic fleet was never denied. The reply of the United Kingdom representatives was invariably the same: the use of nuclear weapons against Argentina was, they said, "inconceivable" or "unthinkable".

However, this reply referred not to the presence of nuclear weapons but to their possible use; in other words, it was a reply to a question which was never asked. But these words are unsatisfactory too, even in their limited context, for what is "inconceivable" or "unthinkable" today may cease to be so tomorrow, as is clear from other statements made at the highest political level which I shall quote later.

The facts I have mentioned are a matter of official record and are therefore undeniable. The conclusion I should like to draw from what I have recounted is the following: if a nuclear-weapon power, invoking reasons of national security, carefully conceals its movements of nuclear weapons into zones supposedly free of such weapons, even among forces engaged in active combat, what value is to be attached to the undertakings that power may give as regards respect for nuclear-weapon-free zones?

What I am saying could apply to any nuclear-weapon-free zone that might be established. The example of the Treaty of Tlatelolco is a good one as it established the only nuclear-weapon-free zone that so far exists in the world, and it may be assumed that the essentials of its provisions will appear in the constituting instruments of any other zones that may be agreed on in the future. It is precisely the experience of what occurred in the South Atlantic in connection with the Treaty of Tlatelolco that justifies our thinking about what happened and about similar situations that could arise on other occasions. If experience is to serve any purpose, such possibilities should be studied and provided against.

The Argentine Republic signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco. At the seventh General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL), the supreme body set up under the Treaty, the observer for the Argentine Republic informed the States parties of the points requiring prior solution before Argentina would be in a position to ratify the Treaty. At that same General Conference the Agency explicitly recognized, in a resolution, "the positive attitude and adherence of Argentina to the purposes and principles of the Treaty expressed at the present session".

The nuclear-weapon powers which ratified the protocols annexed to the Treaty of Tlatelolco undertook to apply the provisions of its articles 1, 3, 5 and 13 (in the case of Additional Protocol I) and fully to respect its express aims and provisions (in the case of Additional Protocol II). The United Kingdom has ratified both protocols.

Article I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco — and it may be presumed that something similar will appear in any other instrument establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone — explicitly prohibits "The receipt, storage, installation, deployment and any form of possession of any nuclear weapons".

If a country which is legally bound by this Treaty decides to introduce nuclear weapons into the zone of application of the Treaty and maintains a strict silence in this connection, if, invoking reasons of national security, it refuses to confirm or deny the presence of such weapons, even in response to legitimate inquiries by other States parties to the same international instrument, if there is no way of verifying whether the undertaking assumed is being respected or not, it is legitimate to ask what value such an undertaking has and consequently what is the value of that

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

How is the perpetual and emphatic preoccupation with verification, which that country's allies bring up at every moment as the essential and universal criteria for every disarmament measure, compatible with this total absence of any possibility of verification of an obligation assumed?

It is clear that we are not talking about a simple harmless passage of nuclear weapons, the mere routine transport of them — although even in this connection there would be much to say — but of weapons installed on ships that are going on a combat mission, which in fact engaged in combat and which have continued to remain stationed in the region.

The conclusion to be drawn from what I have related is, then, of overwhelming importance. What is the point of many countries in all parts of the world making efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones if the nuclear-weapon countries, those which ought in the first place firmly to undertake to respect such zones absolutely — for if they did not, the zones would make no sense — if those countries in reality maintain, immune from any possibility of verification, the utmost liberty to introduce nuclear weapons into the zone and carefully to hide the fact, invoking reasons of national security? What degree of peace, what measure of security will the countries of the region have achieved by assuming, in order to establish the zone, a series of obligations which themselves are subject to maximum verification? The safeguards agreements have to be signed by the non-nuclear-weapon States, but as always, the nuclear-weapon States take good care not to do so. This is the same old story once again: for the nuclear-weapon powers, all rights and no obligations; for the non-nuclear-weapon countries, all obligations and no rights, and all this, for the latter, with the net result of remaining in exactly the same situation as before the establishment of the denuclearized zone.

Total and unarguable respect for denuclearized zones is the essence of the meaning of such zones. Paragraph 33 of the Final Document says so quite clearly:

"The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements or arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the zone concerned and the full compliance with those agreements or arrangements, thus ensuring that the zones are genuinely free from nuclear weapons, and respect for such zones by nuclear-weapon States constitute an important disarmament measure".

The same ideas are reflected in paragraphs 60-63 of the Final Document, and especially in paragraph 62.

The subject of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is not the only one with respect of which the events in the South Atlantic have implications and should be given thought. The right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be threatened by the aggressive deployment of such weapons and to receive security assurances was also called into question by the South Atlantic conflict.

We have taken the case of a bilateral conflict between a nuclear-weapon State and a non-nuclear-weapon State. When the latter receives report after report, none of them denied, that its adversary is deploying nuclear weapons in the zone of conflict, does it not have every right to consider itself threatened? Does there not exist an obvious nuclear threat?

When the nuclear-weapon country refuses again and again to deny — a denial which should have been categorical under the commitments given — that its combat forces are in possession of nuclear weapons, how is the non-nuclear-weapon country expected to react? Should it resign itself to accepting the inevitable? Should it trust blindly

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

My country is convinced that there were nuclear weapons in the South Atlantic, and they may still be there today. For obvious reasons we cannot say precisely what the explanation was: because there was no time to remove them, as has at times been said, or because it was intended to use them if necessary, or for both reasons at the same time. For my country, however, and for many others, the punitive British fleet in the South Atlantic possessed nuclear weapons.

What kind of assurance has a developing country which becomes involved in a conflict with a country that possesses these terrible weapons of mass destruction, that they will not be used against it? Who can assure it of the contrary? The so-called negative security assurances which a nuclear-weapon country may give — absolutely unverifiable and interpreted wholly unilaterally — what are they worth in such circumstances? Must the non-nuclear-weapon country simply accept and be satisfied with oral assurances that the use of such weapons is "unthinkable" or "inconceivable"?

We ought not to forget the value attached to these undertakings at least by one of the nuclear-weapon powers. The head of the Government of that country said quite clearly at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament — and these are her actual words — that such undertakings can never be relied on under the stress of war. In that case we may well ask what was the real worth of the assurances that the use of nuclear weapons in the South Atlantic was "inconceivable" or "unthinkable".

Furthermore, who can guarantee that the decision of a subordinate will not unleash a nuclear attack once the weapons are there? Could there not be a defect in communications? Could there not be a human error? Could not a mere accident happen?

In a situation like the one I have described, how can it be denied that the very presence of nuclear weapons among the combat forces of a nuclear-weapon power in itself constitutes a threat of a nuclear character against the country which is engaged in a conflict with that power?

How can we be sure that there are not at the present time, as a result of the fighting in the South Atlantic, nuclear devices that could not be salvaged lying at the bottom of the ocean, as has been maintained a number of times with plausible evidence? Is it known what the consequences might be of this possibility for the ecology of the seas and the creatures living in them in the short or long term?

In view of the facts and possibilities I have mentioned, it may well be doubted whether the circumstances would have been different if negative security assurances had been in full force in the form in which they are at present conceived, even if they had been embodied in a legally binding international instrument. My opinion is that they would not: things would have been exactly the same, and that will be the case in the future also in the event of similar situations of conflict between a nuclear-weapon country and a non-nuclear-weapon country, particularly when that nuclear-weapon country has — as was the case in this instance — the support and material assistance of an allied power also possessing nuclear weapons, in flagrant disregard for international treaties in the conclusion of which it was the principal protagonist. Does not all this show us that the principle that has so far prevailed in the matter of security assurances ought to be radically changed?

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

Everything that happened in the South Atlantic and the lessons to be drawn from this experience bring me back to the ideas that I expressed at the outset of this statement: what is unacceptable, what is to be condemned, is the existence of nuclear weapons in military arsenals.

We ought not to forget that it is a daily occurrence for nuclear weapons to be moved across oceans, in space and off the shores of non-nuclear-weapon States. The Mediterranean, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and other sea areas are frequently traversed in the course of military manoeuvres and even as demonstrations of power. Rapid deployment forces are part of plans to deal with any emergency. There is in fact, as the Ambassador of Brazil put it so vividly a few days ago, a veritable geographical vertical proliferation. As a result, the nuclear threat is always present. What, however, has been the action advised and promoted to remove this threat? Placing under total safeguards the nuclear installations of the non-nuclear-weapon countries or, symbolically, certain civilian facilities of the nuclear-weapon powers, which preserve intact their full freedom of action to test, develop, improve and deploy their nuclear weapons, without the slightest restriction or control.

All the means sought to reduce the consequences of the situation I have described will be merely palliative and will not change anything very much. The facts I have recounted make it necessary, in my delegation's view, to undertake a thorough reassessment of measures which were adopted with great hopes but which have recently been put to the test of reality.

The bases of these formulas remain valid. But in the light of experience we should try to improve them and in certain cases they call for a detailed reconsideration.

In the last analysis, no risk will disappear completely while nuclear weapons still exist. If they are the guarantee of peace and confer seriousness and responsibility on those who possess them, as some claim -- powers that possess them, naturally -- then the inevitable conclusion is that all countries ought to acquire nuclear weapons, as the Ambassador of Brazil also said a few days ago in his admirable statement.

There is only one alternative to this conclusion and it is that no one should possess nuclear weapons, that they should disappear entirely from the arsenals of this world.

Until that happens, there will remain risks of tragic disaster; the most repugnant inequality will reign in international relations; there will be a handful of privileged States determined to retain their privileges in all their aspects, while the vast majority of countries and peoples will have to stand by helpless as their destiny, their territorial integrity, their future and even their actual survival are sacrificed on the altar of the alleged security, as assessed and defined by them, of the few who have assured to themselves possession of a source of energy which should be a fountain of wealth and well-being but which has become instead a source of terror and a means of aggression and expansionism.

The Committee on Disarmament or at any rate the vast majority of its members are fully aware, in tune with the Final Document, of the real meaning of nuclear weapons and the measures which should be taken with respect to them or at least the goals towards which we should be working. However, if constant obstructionism persists in everything relating to nuclear weapons, there will be very little hope indeed of our being able to achieve what the international community expects of us.

Mr. LIDGARD (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, I first want to express my delegation's and my own warm felicitations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee for this month. Although your predecessor, Ambassador Erdembileg, exerted all efforts, and he deserves our sincere and full appreciation for that, many hurdles remain to be overcome before the Committee can start its actual work. You have already shown both determination and great skill in tackling those issues, and I am therefore fully confident that under your chairmanship this will be a successful month for the Committee. You can count on my delegation's entire co-operation.

In my statement today I intend to deal with the item on chemical weapons.

The Swedish delegation deeply deplores the fact that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons has not yet been able to reconvene and get on with its highly important task. We have noted with appreciation the initiative last Thursday of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic suggesting ways out of this dilemma in order to enable the Working Group to start as soon as possible, as a matter of fact, already from the beginning of this week.

My delegation will welcome any further efforts to this end and will contribute in any way possible.

We started out with intensive work in our chemical weapons negotiations before the beginning of this session. It is rather unfortunate that so much valuable time has since been lost because of lengthy procedural discussions in our Committee. Ways must be found to prevent a repetition of this in the future, and we noted with much interest the ideas expressed by the representative of Yugoslavia on this question at our last meeting.

I would now like to recall some positive developments in the area of chemical weapons negotiations, to which many delegations have contributed.

It is encouraging that several delegations have shown increasing interest in and contributed constructively to the work in the Ad Hoc Working Group. We take note of the fact that the Soviet Union in less than a year has made two major suggestions concerning difficult problems involved in a chemical weapons convention. I am referring both to its position on systematic international on-site inspection as contained in document CD/294, and to its preparedness to include a renewed ban on use in a chemical weapons convention.

Another key delegation, that of the United States, has recently presented its views on the contents of a chemical weapons convention in document CD/343. We also appreciate the initiative that the United States delegation has taken in giving other delegations the opportunity of exploring its views more deeply.

The material which is now available to the Working Group has been compiled during many years. It constitutes a sufficient basis for our negotiations, which should be renewed without further delay.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the United States has observed a unilateral moratorium on the production of chemical weapons since 1969. We regret, however, the current preparations for starting production of binary chemical weapons now that the prospects for a chemical weapons convention look more promising than they have done for many years.

(Mr. Lidgard, Sweden)

I take this opportunity to express once again the opinion of the Swedish delegation that it would be of the utmost importance for creating a climate of confidence in the negotiations if nations clearly declared their possession or non-possession of chemical weapons. As the case may be, they should also declare whether they have in the last few years produced any chemical weapons.

My delegation sincerely appreciates the work of the previous Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group, Ambassador Sujka of Poland. He made considerable efforts to advance our work last year. Not least successful was his invention of the system of contact groups, which turned out to work very effectively. This also increased the possibilities for delegations to participate more actively than in the Working Group sessions.

I would now like to offer some views on the issues to be negotiated.

With regard to the question of use, my delegation has noted with great interest the Soviet proposal to include the ban on the use of chemical weapons in a chemical weapons convention. This seems to be in agreement with the view of the majority of States in the Committee on Disarmament. Sweden has always belonged to those who argue for caution in this context because of the possible detrimental effects such an inclusion could have on the Geneva Protocol. Such effects would be particularly serious if they were to create misgivings among the parties to the Protocol about its value. If, however, a majority of States are now in favour of a repetition, a new situation emerges. Some consequences could be discussed already at this juncture.

An agreement to include a ban on use could mean that the prevailing interpretation of the Geneva Protocol concerning prohibited chemicals must apply also to the chemical weapons convention. This would be consistent with the general purpose criterion, which is a fundamental feature of a future chemical weapons convention. In some practical instances this would mean that both the use and the production, development and stockpiling of tear gases and herbicides should be included in the convention. It cannot be logical to exclude these substances from being covered by the chemical weapons convention if they are generally considered to be included in the Geneva Protocol. Their production, development and stockpiling for permitted purposes should be clearly spelled out in the convention.

It is appropriate to consider another aspect of the inclusion of a ban on use in the convention. As is known, Sweden has proposed that some activities in order to acquire or retain a capability to use chemical weapons should also be prohibited. Those activities concern planning, organization and training for offensive use of chemical weapons, and should, thus, also become subject to compliance procedures. We have noted with great interest that similar thoughts have been brought forward in the United States' views on the contents of a chemical weapons convention.

Significant progress has been made in the last year with regard to the question of compliance and verification. However, further development is necessary. For my own delegation it is clear that international on-site inspection is necessary in order to monitor the destruction of chemical weapons and of facilities for their production. The questions of levels of verification and methods to be used require further consideration. My delegation attaches great importance to this question. I would like to underline that countries like Sweden, which do not have any chemical weapons, but are situated in regions where such weapons exist, have a particular interest in ensuring that those weapons and their production facilities have actually been destroyed. We must, like any other country, safeguard our own security.

(Mr. Lidgard, Sweden)

Likewise, international means have to be found to monitor the non-production of supertoxic lethal chemicals and key precursors. This might be best ensured through routine monitoring on the basis of agreed on-site visits according to a random selection system. In this particular case it would thereby be possible to avoid a politically cumbersome system based on verification by challenge.

On the other hand, a system of verification by challenge would be necessary in the future, when the destruction period has expired. Situations can then be foreseen in which consultations, either bilaterally or in the consultative committee, will not clarify the issues. In such cases the parties will have to resort to on-site inspection. It is particularly important to note that once a question of a possible violation of the convention has been brought before the consultative committee, it is no longer the concern merely of the parties directly involved but of all parties to the convention. This fact should encourage a challenged party to admit on-site inspection rather than to refuse it. We cannot accept as an argument for a refusal the contention that allegations of a violation of the convention were made primarily or for that matter solely in order to embarrass the challenged party. That party would rather have an excellent opportunity to expose such inadmissible aims simply by allowing inspection. Turning down the request would, on the other hand, be perceived as a tacit admission of a violation. Likewise, the excuse that the challenging party would get a chance to explore conditions unrelated to the convention would not hold water either. If there is willingness, on-site inspection can no doubt be arranged in ways to preclude disclosure of unrelated sensitive knowledge to the challenging party.

I do not wish to go further into other aspects of the verification issues at this juncture. My delegation hopes that they will soon be effectively handled in the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Finally, I wish to state that the Committee on Disarmament in the elaboration of a chemical weapons convention, has been entrusted with a truly important task. It is immensely complicated and difficult. We are, however, greatly encouraged by the fact that the major military powers seem genuinely committed to achieving results on it in this multilateral negotiating forum. If we succeed, and let us hope we shall, it will also give the strongest impetus to the Committee as an instrument for disarmament negotiations.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Lidgard for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador de la Gorce.

Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, it is with the greatest pleasure that the French delegation offers you its congratulations and best wishes. You represent a country with which France has ties of close friendship.

Your experience, your courteous authority and your patience assure us that our discussions will be conducted in the best conditions. Your great qualities as a negotiator will certainly be needed to help us resolve the difficulties we have been encountering in the organization of our session.

I should at the same time like to offer Ambassador Erdembileg the sincere thanks of the French delegation for his efforts as Chairman of the Committee for the month of February.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

I have already, in an earlier statement, stressed the importance of the negotiations initiated in our Committee on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

This importance and this urgency make it all the more regrettable that today, more than a month after the opening of our 1983 session, it has not been possible to resume those negotiations.

This delay has nevertheless not prevented our Committee from hearing important statements on the subject of chemical weapons.

Following upon the statement of Mr. Bush, Vice-President of the United States, the United States delegation on 10 February submitted a document on "United States detailed views on the contents of a chemical weapons ban" (CD/343). This document has evoked reactions and comments from a number of delegations.

Since then, two States non-members of the Committee, Finland and Spain, have expressed their views on certain technical aspects of a convention.

Lastly, on 22 February, we heard a statement by Ambassador Issraelyan, the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union, which we found of the greatest interest.

That statement and the United States document had something in common: both dealt with a subject to which France, the depositary of the 1925 Protocol, attaches particular importance, namely, the question of the inclusion in the future convention of a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons -- a prohibition already contained in the Geneva Protocol.

On this matter, the statement of Mr. Issraelyan marks a change in the Soviet position. The delegation of the USSR now proposes that the States parties to the convention should undertake not to "develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain, transfer or use chemical weapons".

It also proposes that the section of the convention devoted to verification should envisage appropriate procedures for the verification of compliance with the **provisions prohibiting the use of chemical weapons**.

The French delegation would have no objection to the inclusion of provision for such procedures in the convention. Obviously, any use of chemical weapons would be proof of the violation of the prohibition on retention of them.

But the negotiations required for the adoption of such provisions -- in the convention we are discussing -- will take time. Until then, it would seem useful to establish provisional procedures.

That is the purpose of resolution 37/98 D adopted by the General Assembly at its last session and entitled: "Provisional procedures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol". The Soviet delegation has expressed criticism of that resolution and the procedures it provides for.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

It considers, on the one hand, that such provisions should have been adopted by the States parties to the Protocol and not by the States Members of the United Nations. We do not find this objection convincing because, as Ambassador Issraelyan said, the Protocol has become "an irrevocable part of international law". It is thus legitimate for the international community represented by the United Nations to decide to adopt procedures to uphold its authority.

The Soviet delegation also considers that provisions relating to the verification of compliance with the prohibition of use ought to be adopted on the basis of negotiations, which implies a consensus, and not through a vote on a resolution.

We agree with the Soviet delegation in thinking that provisions adopted through a convention should settle the problem of verification once and for all, in the matter of use as in other spheres.

However, we maintain that the procedures set forth in resolution 37/98 D are in no way contrary to international law and fill a need until such time as the provisions of a convention have been adopted.

The French delegation, in its statement introducing resolution 37/98 D on 19 November 1982, quoted in detail the conclusions submitted in this connection by independent bodies whose members included persons of all political persuasions, including some from the Soviet Union: these bodies were the Palme Commission and two Pugwash groups of experts who met in 1981 and 1982. All recommended the speedy and necessary establishment of machinery for the consideration of complaints and the investigation of charges.

The "provisional procedures" provided for in resolution 37/98 D have the same object in view. I would stress the word "provisional", for it was never the intention of the sponsors of the resolution to prejudge the future or to replace future commitments under a convention. The sole object of the resolution is the speedy establishment of a means of investigation in order to uphold the authority of and to ensure respect for the Geneva Protocol pending such future commitments.

The procedures instituted under that resolution will cease to be applicable when a convention on chemical weapons enters into force; until then, and whatever the scope of application ~~proposed for~~ the convention under negotiation, they will be extremely useful.

As to the repetition of the prohibition on use itself in the text of the future convention, the French delegation has always had reservations in this respect. In fact we believe that such a repetition might create more problems than it resolves.

What is important is to avoid in any way undermining the authority of the Geneva Protocol, which is the very basis of the regime of the prohibition of use of chemical weapons.

In this connection the French delegation noted with satisfaction the firmness with which Ambassador Issraelyan stressed the value of the Geneva Protocol as an "irrevocable part of international law".

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

The French delegation believes that the preamble to the convention should include a paragraph reaffirming the validity of the Protocol. In our view, such a text ought also to state that the Protocol forms part of international law and that the prohibitions it contains apply to all. We also think, like the delegation of the Soviet Union and most other delegations, that the future convention ought to stipulate that none of its provisions should be interpreted as in any way detracting from the obligations flowing from the Geneva Protocol.

Is it necessary to go further and repeat, in a specific provision, the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons? The Soviet delegation assures us that there would be no disadvantage in parties to the Geneva Protocol who became parties to the convention being bound by two undertakings at the same time. We have serious reservations in this respect.

We cannot be sure that a repetition of the prohibition on use really reinforces that prohibition. Is it intended thereby to prohibit any possibility of a response to a possible violation of the convention? The complete and verified elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities will, when completed, make a response physically impossible; and until then it seems unlikely that a provision in a convention could annul the right of every State to derogate from its obligations under a treaty with respect to a partner which violated them, and to formulate reservations to that effect.

It would seem, too, that the inclusion in the same article of the convention of the prohibition of use, on the one hand, and the prohibition of manufacture, retention, etc., on the other, would create a difficult problem. In fact it would almost inevitably start a discussion on the scope of application of the prohibition of use (as regards the products covered).

Some among us will undoubtedly not be content with the general formula in the Geneva Protocol; in trying to make it more explicit, they will inevitably end up with provisions that will restrict its scope.

Furthermore, there is no question for us but that the sphere of application of the prohibition of use should remain what it is in the Geneva Protocol, that is to say, something much wider than the scope of the prohibitions relevant to chemical disarmament.

The French delegation is ready to continue examining the new Soviet proposals in the light of the explanations that may be given us in the course of our discussions.

Although Ambassador Issrealyan has told us that the Soviet delegation's proposals are designed to remove the principal obstacle hindering the negotiations, the French delegation nevertheless considers that these proposals still do not offer a definitive response on the question at issue: that of the scope of the prohibition. It would like, lastly, to point out that the elaboration of an international verification procedure remains an essential task and the one presenting the greatest difficulty. We look forward on this point, too, to constructive proposals from the Soviet delegation.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador de la Gorce for his statement and for his kind words with respect to myself and my country. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Ambassador Datcu.

Mr. DATCU (Romania) (translated from French): In your opening statement as Chairman of this Committee for the month of March, you said that Morocco deemed it a great honour to be presiding over the work of this multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Allow me today to tell you that the Romanian delegation in turn deems it a great honour to see you occupying this important office in the Committee as the representative of a country with which Romania maintains excellent relations of friendship and co-operation. We are convinced that your exceptional qualities such as your mental acuity and subtlety are going to be all the more necessary to us in this difficult phase of our work. I should also like to thank the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Erdembileg, for his dedication and tireless efforts in the service of the Committee during the particularly difficult month of February. The Ambassador of Mongolia presided over our debates with a distinction and a competence which honour his delegation and his country. I should like to assure him of the gratitude of my delegation.

Permit me also on this day, the 8th of March, to offer the warm congratulations of the Romanian delegation to all the women present in this chamber and to all those who work with us and give their valuable assistance in the work of the Committee; and I should also like to express the hope that their number around this table will in the future increase.

The main conclusion reached in the important statements the Romanian delegation has heard at plenary meetings of the Committee on Disarmament since the beginning of the session is that the year 1983 will be crucial for international peace and security. It is obvious, therefore, that the efforts undertaken to put a stop to the arms race should be of a very urgent kind. However, after five weeks of work, the truth has to be admitted. We are obliged to recognize that the Committee is still today in the initial, preliminary phase of its work, discussing its agenda and programme of work.

In your opening statement you stressed that the peoples of the world see disarmament as a vital necessity, the more so as the arms race, in changing in dimensions and aspects, has changed in kind. The danger it presents today is not that of a war confined to a single region or even a single continent, and ending with a winner and a loser, but that of a general, world-wide disaster. It is clear today that on the outcome of the disarmament negotiations -- in this Committee and elsewhere -- depends, let us say it simply but solemnly, our survival. In view of these ineluctable realities, it is a euphemism to say that the Committee on Disarmament is still far from having responded or even reacted in a satisfactory manner.

As Ambassador de Souza e Silva, the head of the Brazilian delegation, emphasized in his statement of 3 March 1983, we ought to realize that the purpose of this negotiating forum is not simply to produce an annual balance sheet, negotiated with difficulty, setting forth our differences of opinion. Our responsibilities are much more serious and pressing. Fulfilling them, particularly this year, requires greater efforts from all of us. In this connection I should like to make some suggestions as to the principles which should govern our work at this stage of the Committee's activities.

In the first place, we believe that the right of each delegation here to submit for negotiation the proposals it considers appropriate for the security of its own country and of others should be unanimously recognized in the Committee on Disarmament as it is recognized in other international forums. If that were our practice,

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

the adoption of the agenda would no longer be an end in itself or an obstacle to our proceeding to negotiations of substance in the Committee.

This, in our view, means that the addition of items to the agenda should be, not the result of lengthy negotiations but the first step towards negotiations. The unfortunate tendency which has become apparent in the Committee of specifying in great detail the final result of the negotiations through the formulation of the agenda item should be replaced by the acceptance of forms of wording which, while expressing the substance of the future negotiations, in no way limit the right of each delegation to express its views on the subject under discussion. Otherwise we shall continue to encounter situations like that which has arisen over the legitimate request for the inclusion in the agenda of an item on the prevention of nuclear war.

Secondly, the Romanian delegation considers it essential for the Committee to concentrate its efforts on certain priority issues in order to achieve positive results. It is obvious that in the amount of time we have available we cannot hope to exhaust the consideration of all the subjects included on the agenda. While recognizing and supporting the principle of a priority approach as regards certain subjects, we should like to stress that the principal criterion for choosing those subjects should still be the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly. All States are represented there and they are in a position to take account not only of the state of advancement of our negotiations but also of other principles such as the urgency of the measures to be taken, their impact on international peace and security and the demands of international public opinion.

It is obvious that after the adoption of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, which we hope will take place as soon as possible, the course to be followed in the negotiations, and the priorities, will be much clearer to all participants.

Lastly, in the light of what has been going on up to now this year and what has happened at previous sessions, we believe that a very special effort is needed to de-dramatize the importance that procedure has assumed in our activity, for the rules of procedure were meant to help us in our work and not to paralyse it. The fact that we have begun a constructive dialogue on certain problems regarding our agenda is certainly encouraging, but the situation is hardly satisfactory. We are among those who think that it is better to accept the "risk of innovation" than to suffer the effects of a total blockage in the negotiations on the substance of certain burning issues. For there is no dearth of ideas in this connection. Allow me to recall the proposals made by Mr. Kazimir Vidas, the Ambassador of Yugoslavia, who suggested on 3 March 1983 that as soon as an item is on the agenda, or a working group set up, they should be renewed at the beginning of each session of the Committee unless a decision has been taken to put an end to the negotiations in question. A few days ago the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Alfonso García Robles, proposed that for the adoption of its agenda the Committee on Disarmament should apply the same rules as are used with respect to the agenda of the Security Council. I should also like to recall that in working paper CD/330 of 13 September 1982 the Group of 21 suggested an amendment of rule 25 of the rules of procedure concerning the establishment of subsidiary bodies.

My delegation believes that all these suggestions and many other proposals should be seen as an expression of the growing and legitimate concern of the members of the Committee at its lack of success. And it is becoming more and more clear

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

to everyone that this situation cannot continue. The greater the attempt to reduce multilateral negotiations between 40 delegations to a dialogue between groups, the more our negotiations become mere polemics between blocs.

It is high time for a change of attitude so that our efforts may be directed, not towards identifying the differences that divide us but towards trying to act together, before it is too late, to halt and reverse this headlong race towards self-destruction and self-annihilation.

For there are possible solutions.

They are within our reach. Positions on certain questions are closer than might at first be thought. Our impression is that insufficient attention has been paid to the constructive proposals of certain delegations, particularly where the proposals in question have not encountered major objections. We believe that more time and energy should be devoted to such proposals and we support your idea, Mr. Chairman, of holding consultations open to all with a view to resolving without delay these questions that are still before us. At the same time, we should like to renew our appeal to all our colleagues, to all delegations to show flexibility and a constructive spirit so as to enable us as soon as possible to pass on to a thorough consideration of the questions of substance on our agenda with a view to finding generally acceptable solutions. For every day that passes without a constructive and concentrated contribution to real disarmament negotiations is another day to the credit of the arms race.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Datcu for his statement and for his kind words with respect to myself and my country. I should now like to give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Herder.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Today is the 8th of March, which is being celebrated as International Women's Day all over the world. May I avail myself of this opportunity, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate all the women in this chamber and in the booths on this occasion, to wish them well and good luck and to tell them how much we appreciate their valuable assistance.

Last Thursday my delegation, on behalf of the socialist group, submitted a number of concrete proposals aimed at the early resumption of the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons. Our group proposed that work on the chemical weapons convention be resumed immediately, on 7 March 1983. We submitted a number of alternative proposals to facilitate this process and to solve pending questions.

Unfortunately we have to state that these proposals have not found the attention they deserve. Last Friday, at the informal consultations headed by you, Mr. Chairman, and with the co-ordinators and many other delegations participating, the delegations concerned -- despite repeated questions -- did not comment on these proposals nor did they submit their own proposals. We are deeply concerned by this situation. We want to reaffirm our readiness to agree immediately on the resumption of the activities of the chemical weapons Working Group.

In the meantime another alternative has been mentioned, namely, to appoint the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Jaipal, to act

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

as temporary Chairman of the chemical weapons Working Group during the month of March. We would be ready to consider this also as a possibility to enable us to get out of the deadlock.

We would like to ask you, Mr. Chairman, to take all measures necessary so that as a result of further consultations agreement can be achieved quickly on starting the work of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons.

On this occasion I would like to recall that in my statement on 22 February I proposed that we should invite a representative from Viet Nam to explain in a more detailed way the results of an International Symposium on Herbicides and Defoliants in War held in Ho Chi Minh City early this year. Your predecessor in the office of Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Erdembileg, had agreed and started consultations. I would like to ask you to direct the requisite attention to this question and to continue consultations. I would be glad if, as a result of your consultations, we received already in the next few days a positive reply to this proposal.

Mr. NUÑEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, the head of my delegation, Ambassador Solá Vila, will shortly have an opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of March.

Without prejudice to what Ambassador Herder of the German Democratic Republic has just said, which my delegation supports, I have asked for the floor in order to issue an invitation to interested delegations in the Committee on Disarmament and I have requested the secretariat to distribute this invitation today. As you know, on 21 February 1983 the Cuban delegation submitted to the Committee on Disarmament document CD/349 containing the Final Summary Report of the International Symposium on Herbicides and Defoliants in War: The Long-Term Effects on Man and Nature, which was held in Ho Chi Minh City from 13 to 20 January 1983 and in which more than 160 experts from 21 countries participated, including some members of the Committee on Disarmament such as Cuba, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy and others. From 9 to 11 March, that is to say, during the coming three days, Mr. Ton Duc Lang, a professor at the Hanoi Hospital and one of the scientists who participated in the Symposium will be in Geneva after completing a tour in the Federal Republic of Germany where he gave a number of lectures on the use of chemical weapons in Viet Nam. In view of the interest which some delegations have shown in document CD/349, my delegation would like to take advantage of the occasion and has decided to invite interested delegations to an informal meeting to be held on Thursday, 10 March, at 9.30 a.m. in conference room I.

Mr. MIDDLETON (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, the distinguished representative of Argentina, in the course of his long statement this morning, said that he did not wish to bring into the Committee a bilateral conflict. That is also the wish of my delegation. We regret all the more, therefore, that in a statement purporting to deal with questions of general interest, the distinguished representative of Argentina should once more have made allegations which have been replied to on many previous occasions. I would refer distinguished representatives to the exchanges in the General Assembly during the second special session (document A/S-12/PV.23), in this Committee in September last year (CD/PV.187) and in the First Committee of the General Assembly in the autumn (A/C.1/37/PV.7).

(Mr. Middleton, United Kingdom)

I see no reason this morning to weary the Committee by repeating the arguments set out in those records, nor would distinguished representatives expect me to depart from my Government's invariable practice with respect to statements concerning the presence of nuclear weapons in any particular instance. But I would point out that the allegations this morning and the arguments produced are all based on supposition. What, on the other hand, is factual is that the British Government made clear at an early stage in the conflict that it was inconceivable that nuclear weapons would be used, and this statement, as is obvious to everyone, was borne out by events.

Mr. CARSALES (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): I shall be very brief. My delegation has no desire either to prolong what would be a bilateral debate. But I should like to emphasize again that the purpose of my statement this morning was not to bring a bilateral conflict into this Committee or to make accusations. All my comments were based on statements made at the time and reflected in the records either of the General Assembly, the Security Council or the British Parliament. The Committee on Disarmament is competent to deal with many questions connected precisely with the problems of disarmament, including the questions of nuclear-weapon-free zones, negative security assurances and others. Certain events which took place in the South Atlantic are, in my delegation's view, intimately connected with the subjects I mentioned earlier. It was precisely the purpose of my statement to bring to the notice of the Committee the conclusions which, my delegation believes, can be drawn from the events in the South Atlantic as regards certain matters which the Committee has before it for consideration. It is my firm conviction that these comments were perfectly valid, and they are still so after the remarks of the representative of the United Kingdom.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I have no further speakers on my list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I see that that is not the case.

I should like to say a few words about the statement of Ambassador Herder with respect to possible contributions from the delegation of Viet Nam. You will no doubt remember that at the consultation meeting I held last Friday I asked members to consider also the question of the participation of States non-members. I have not received any views or suggestions in this connection. I think the problem has been one of time; we have not had enough time to take up that matter. Nevertheless I intend to ask Ambassador Erdembileg, my eminent predecessor, the results of the consultations he conducted on this subject so that I can take them up where he left off. I can also say that without waiting for the statement of Ambassador Herder I had already begun negotiations with certain delegations in the Committee on this point and I intend to continue them.

The next plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 10 March, at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.