

COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.234
16 August 1983
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 16 August 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. J. Morelli Pando

(Peru)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <u>Algeria:</u> | Mr. A. TAFFAR |
| <u>Argentina:</u> | Mr. J. CARASALES |
| <u>Australia:</u> | Mr. R. STEELE |
| <u>Belgium:</u> | Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE |
| <u>Brazil:</u> | Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA Mr. S. QUIEROZ DUARTE |
| <u>Bulgaria:</u> | Mr. K. TELLALOV Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV Mr. V. BOZHKOV Mr. P. POPTCHEV |
| <u>Burma:</u> | U TIN KYAW HLAING U THAN TUN |
| <u>Canada:</u> | Mr. G.R. SKINNER |
| <u>China:</u> | Mr. TIAN JIN Mr. PAN ZHENQIANG Mr. ZHOU YUNHUA |
| <u>Cuba:</u> | Mr. J. HEREDIA PEREZ |
| <u>Czechoslovakia:</u> | Mr. M. VEJVODA Mr. A. CIMA |
| <u>Egypt:</u> | Mr. S.E. EL REEDY Mr. I. ALI HASSAN Mr. W. BASSIM |
| <u>Ethiopia:</u> | Mr. B. DERESSA Mr. F. YOHANNES |
| <u>France:</u> | Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE |

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. H. ROSE
Ms. H. HOPPE
Mr. F. SAYATZ

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. F. ELBE
Mr. VON DEM HAGEN

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES
Mr. T. TOTH

India:

Mr. M. DUBEY

Indonesia:

Mr. I. DAMANIK
Ms. P. RAMADHAN
Mr. M. JALALUDDIN
Mr. N. WISNOEMOERTI

Islamic Republic of Iran:

Mr. N. KAZEMI KAMYAB
Mr. F.S. SIRJANI

Italy:

Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan:

Mr. R. IMAI
Mr. M. KONISHI

Kenya:

Mr. P. NOUGI MWAURA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Ms. Z. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO
Mr. P. MACEDO RIBA

Mongolia:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG

Morocco:

Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands:

Mr. J. RAMAKER
Mr. R.J. ACKERMAN

Nigeria:

Mr. G.O. IJEWERE
Mr. L.O. AKINDELE
Mr. J. OBOH

Pakistan:

Mr. M. AHMAD

Mr. T. ALTAF

Peru:

Mr. J. MORELLI PANDO

Mr. C. CASTILLO

Poland:

Mr. S. TURBANSKI

Mr. T. STROJWAS

Mr. G. CZEMPINSKI

Mr. J. CIALOWICZ

Romania:

Mr. I. DATCU

Sri Lanka:

Mr. P. KARIYAWASAM

Sweden:

Mr. H. BERGLUND

Mr. R. EKEUS

Mr. R. ANGSTROM

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. V. ISSRAELYAN

Mr. B. PROKOFIEV

Mr. N. VASHADZE

Mr. G. BERDENNIKOV

Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN

United Kingdom:

Mr. I. CROMARTIE

Ms. J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

Mr. L.G. FIELDS

Mr. R.L. HORNE

Mr. R. MIKULAK

Mr. R. NORMAN

Mr. P. CORDEN

Venezuela:

Mr. T. LABRADOR RUBIO

Mr. O. GARCIA GARCIA

Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. O. GNOK

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

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the
Committee on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 234th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

According to its programme of work, the Committee should today begin its consideration of the reports of the working groups and organizational questions. However, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, members so wishing may make statements on any other subject relevant to the work of the Committee.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Venezuela, the Federal Republic of Germany, Mexico, Ethiopia and Brazil.

I now give the floor to the first speaker on my list, the representative of Venezuela, Mr. Labrador Rubio.

Mr. LABRADOR RUBIO (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, allow me in the first place to offer you and your predecessors the congratulations of the Venezuelan delegation to the Committee on Disarmament on the praiseworthy efforts you have made in guiding the work of this negotiating body whose tasks are as delicate and important as they are arduous and demanding of skill, patience and indefatigable optimism, of all of which you have given a clear demonstration.

My delegation reiterates its desire to continue co-operating in the pursuit of the objectives of this body in spite of the discouragement which the size of the task may provoke.

I should like on this occasion to state Venezuela's position regarding certain items on the Committee's agenda that are of great importance both by reason of their recognized urgency and because of their consequences for the survival of the international community in general and of Venezuela as a peaceful country in particular.

Special attention has been given in this body to the subjects of the cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war.

These subjects, which in our view today constitute the fundamental justification for the existence of this Committee, call for the repetition -- never, in spite of appearances, superfluous -- of certain critical assessments concerning the basic premises of the nuclear strategy.

However, I do not intend to deny that deterrence, the basis of current strategy, may be effective. No one is in a position to state that if nuclear war has not broken out, that is either because of or in spite of the theory of deterrence.

The important thing, in our view, is to continue to point out, although it has repeatedly been said, that an international situation based primarily on such strategic calculations is fragile indeed.

This fragility is the result of the weakness of the concepts which go to make up the fundamental tenets of deterrence.

The basic problem of nuclear deterrence consists, according to the Danish sociologist Anders Boserup, in its inherent lack of credibility, which is due in turn to the fact that the foreseeable reprisals in the event of nuclear aggression would in themselves be disproportionate in their effects but militarily insignificant.

(Mr. Labrador Rubio, Venezuela)

The lack of credibility of this theory of deterrence has immediate repercussions as regards the absurd and illusory notion of international security and stability which it is claimed are afforded by the theory.

It is impossible to create a strategic balance on the basis of military means which are by definition unusable, that is to say, useless. To quote the words of Glucksmann, "strategic forces exist in order never to fight each other", and they do not fight each other because if they did the result would be the total annihilation of mankind.

The lack of credibility of deterrence has limited it, in the best of cases, to preventing direct aggression between the superpowers on their own territories, allegedly "sanctuarized".

But not even this sphere of effective deterrence provides an acceptable margin of international security.

The danger does not reside in the fact that each superpower possesses the nuclear means for deterring the other from attacking it.

The threat comes from the possibility that these means may at some time be used to resolve a military conflict arising in some part of the world, which appears to be of a limited character but which in fact opens the door to a generalized and total nuclear war.

Thus the international security which, according to the theory, should result from deterrence and military stability or balance is negligible, non-existent.

It is for this reason that the strategy of deterrence has evolved in the direction of notions of limited nuclear war and a balance of conventional forces, militarily unconquerable by the opponent.

But no one is in a position to affirm the credibility of a limited nuclear war, since it is hardly possible to credit the product of a theory which itself lacks credibility, and a limited nuclear war presupposes the possibility of generalizing it precisely in order to maintain it within its original limits and, finally, because military leaders have formally denied the possibility of such a conflict.

And this lack of real viability is not reduced by the militarily circumscribed objectives of a limited war -- by the fact that, as it is claimed, neither the surrender of the enemy nor victory over him would be sought but simply the rapid conclusion of warfare in the best conditions for negotiation; nor is it reduced by the manufacture and improvement of tactical weapons with, so to say, localized effects or the strengthening of the conventional forces of the opposing blocs.

Once a limited war was started the most likely thing is that it would become general and total, with the consequences we all know, we have been warned of and fear but have not frankly and honestly tried to avoid, at least up to now.

This situation, which has indisputably been created by the superpowers, has negative consequences for the countries of the third world.

In view of the fact that, while by insane arguments acceptable, a global conflict is rationally impossible, confrontation tends to express itself through third party adversaries. And these adversaries are our countries, the territories of the non-nuclear-weapon powers, which are a tempting arena for the opposing States.

(Mr. Labrador Rubio, Venezuela)

This state of affairs, which jeopardizes our survival without giving us the possibility of effective decision in the matter, and which in the very best of circumstances compels us to dissipate our energies on various activities contrary to the development which our peoples demand, ~~makes~~ us raise our voices of dissent and demand from the great powers of the earth a change in their manner of conceiving international relations in particular and the future of mankind in general.

Local military conflicts represent general military situations and such situations reflect ideological antagonisms. But these ideological antagonisms, in which the peoples of the entire world are involved, could and should be resolved by means other than that of force.

Venezuela is at present participating with deep concern in the solution of one of the most delicate and explosive confrontations on earth, that of Central America. Although we do not deny the importance and gravity of the conflicts in central and northern Africa, the Middle East and south-west Asia, the proximity of and our connections with the Central American isthmus cause us to give it particular attention, and we would urge the distinguished members of this Committee also to pay attention to the urgent problem in Central America.

The so-called Contadora Group, consisting of Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela, is feverishly seeking a peaceful solution to the East-West confrontation taking place in this region.

The Declaration of Cancun, signed in Mexico by the Presidents of the countries of the Contadora Group, expressly stipulates, among other things, as a condition for the solution of the conflict, the cessation of foreign intervention in the region through the elimination of foreign military advisers.

This single example is enough to indicate the seriousness of a situation which could very easily be transplanted to other regions of the earth where third world countries are being used as theatres of war for the major ideological confrontation.

That is, basically and without the slightest doubt, the essence of the problem which has the existence of the world hanging by the nuclear thread.

This was why Field-Marshal Montgomery said that what needed to be done was to resolve the political and ideological differences which divide the world. Otherwise war, either conventional or nuclear, will put paid to mankind.

This resolution of differences can only take place through the adoption of concrete measures revealing the existence of an element the lack of which has been constantly condemned in this Committee, namely the political will of States to resolve their differences peacefully, including those broad differences that are of an ideological character.

This political will should be reflected in all the measures that may be adopted to achieve disarmament in all its aspects.

We demand, before anything else a demonstration of good faith and goodwill in the smoothing of the path towards the signing of a treaty which would free us, the demonstrably peaceful countries, from the threat of the use of nuclear weapons against us.

(Mr. Labrador Rubio, Venezuela)

We urge the prohibition of nuclear tests without, however, our being deprived of the possibility of sharing in the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Secondly, and as a measure contributing to the creation of an international climate of confidence, we would endorse in the realm of nuclear disarmament, for example, the concrete proposals made in that connection by the USSR, the United States and Belgium. What we should do now is to pass on from the stage of the formulation of proposals to that of negotiations on them. No member of this Committee can reasonably deny that.

And any agreements which the Committee on Disarmament may be able to reach in other spheres of its work will contribute to the achievement of this end.

Since there already exists the fairly immediate possibility of an agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons, the Committee ought to endeavour at once to initiate work on the refining of the basic elements of such an agreement. Objective criteria should be used to elucidate ambiguous concepts which are hampering the negotiations and thus to reach a clear definition of the ideas of "permitted uses", "defensive purposes" (which seem difficult to accept except in the form of the neutralization of the toxic effects of chemical agents) and "precursors" and "key precursors", and agreement should be reached, through negotiation, on the machinery for the declaration and destruction of existing stocks of chemical weapons and the verification thereof.

The same could be said of the negotiations on the prohibition of radiological weapons. Great efforts have been made to define such devices and it would seem that the objective criterion of adequate causality, in the sense of "mechanism causing damage", could be useful as the initial element for the opening of broader negotiations on a treaty the text of which already exists in the relevant contact group.

The prohibition of the military use of outer space appears to us of outstanding importance, particularly if, as a complement to the concrete measures for the prevention of nuclear war, it is used to maintain, during the period that deterrence remains in force, a transparent flow of information which will help prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war through accident or miscalculation.

Lastly, we can never insist enough on the urgency of the need to seek concrete remedies for the situation of lack of confidence which is the present atmosphere of the arms race.

Considering that the major challenge is the elimination, if not immediate, then at least remote, and certainly the prompt reduction of the nuclear threat; we are obliged, much to our regret, to agree with the limited but realistic statement of Jean Rostand that after the discovery of nuclear fission, humanity must be prepared to live under the constant threat of death, but as he added, since this confrontation with death is so fruitful for the individual, why can it not also be for the species?

Would that the danger of the disappearance of all our peoples might unite us in a search for a future of justice, liberty and well-being for all of us.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Venezuela for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Ambassador Wegener.

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. Chairman, I should like to address today the topic of radiological weapons.

Colleagues will remember that in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Radiological Weapons in 1982 I conducted a series of in-depth consultations on the future of our negotiations. I was satisfied to report at that time -- just about a year ago -- that my detailed inquiry had shown a general consensus that substantial importance was still attributed to the subject of radiological weapons and that negotiations should be pursued at a rapid pace with a view to an early conclusion. My inquiry had also shown that the vast majority of delegations agreed that the protection of nuclear installations from attack should be improved by appropriate international regulation, and that such a regulation could be evolved in the framework of the Committee on Disarmament. The broad agreement on these two points then seemed to constitute an excellent basis for negotiations during the current year.

However, in spite of the commendable effort of those who have presided over our endeavours, almost no progress has been registered during the current session. Our negotiations on radiological weapons, in both group A and group B, are in a sorry state. Why? How can we explain that negotiations are at a point of almost total stagnation in an area where the Committee has solemnly agreed to negotiate, where three years of hard work have been put in, where the purpose of the exercise -- a total ban on a particular type of weapon of mass destruction -- is universally shared? Why does progress elude us in such a blatant, not to say scandalous manner?

Last year's proceedings were rendered difficult, and often halted, by the problem of linkage between the two related problems of the prohibition of radiological weapons proper and the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities. This year, by contrast, we have succeeded in postponing the final consideration of this issue, allowing two separate strands of negotiation to deal with the substantive merits of the two subject-matters. The linkage problem will undoubtedly re-emerge, but other difficult issues have been prominent during the current session. I do not purport to go into a detailed analysis of these various problems and the prospects for achievement or failure on each one. I would rather suggest, as the view of my delegation, that there have been three overriding obstacles which have contributed to stultifying this year's negotiating process.

In group A, two problems persist and seem to loom larger now than ever before. In the first place, a group of delegations wishes to use the future radiological weapons treaty as a platform for new, additional obligations on the part of nuclear-weapon States in the field of nuclear disarmament. Secondly, comprehensive

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

demands have been restated that the future convention contain an article providing for unencumbered access to nuclear technology in a broad sense, going far beyond radioactive materials and for new obligations on the part of technology-holding States in this respect. These demands extend far beyond the normal delineating clauses in similar treaties, where, corresponding to the scope of prohibition, it is routinely stated that the stipulations of the treaty do not affect normal peaceful uses and patterns of international co-operation. At the same time, the formulation of these demands betrays that there is hesitation on the part of some delegations to spell out the fact that the peaceful use of nuclear energy and radioactive materials should be fully consistent with the need to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. On these two problems all compromise proposals in group A, stemming in part from last year, have been brushed aside and discussion has gone around in circles.

In group B, fundamental contradictions and mutually exclusive views persist as to the scope of prohibition and the purpose of the possible new legal instrument in this field. In seemingly endless rounds of discussion, some delegations have insisted that, quite apart from preventing the mass-destruction effects of possible attacks on dangerous nuclear facilities, the real purpose of a legal instrument should be the safeguarding and sanctuarizing of their total nuclear fuel cycle; while others have been adamant in demanding that the prohibition of attack must in an undifferentiated manner pertain both to civilian and military facilities, even including weapons systems.

My delegation, and I want to stress this, does not question the legitimacy of these demands or the desirability for those delegations which have put them forward to see them adopted and observed. Nor do I want to question, or even examine, the objective significance of these demands in terms of the national security perspective of the proponents.

Since, however, these demands have proven to be the main stumbling-blocks of our negotiations this year, and since there is not even a remote prospect for any consensus which would cover them in full, it would appear equally legitimate to my delegation to examine these three proposals from the view-point of negotiating methodology.

In this perspective the maintenance of the positions I have described seems to be at variance with the accepted tenets of multilateral negotiations in a twofold manner.

First negotiation, in my view, is a purposeful endeavour to reach a shared regulating objective by a gradual meeting of minds, a rational dialogue which aims at the maximization of collective interest, and the greatest possible consideration of individual interests in the attainment of the collective goals. But if multilateral treaty-making is a process of balancing out a variety of interests, then no participant in the negotiations can hope to prevail entirely.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

with his predetermined position. Negotiating would then seem to require a permanent disposition towards flexibility where national perspectives are constantly re-examined in the light of the progress of the negotiations. If that disposition is not present, and delegations persist in restating detailed positions that were fashioned years ago without any notable change, then the negotiations will degenerate into a very sterile and repetitious exercise, an external juxtaposition of views. This is, unfortunately, what we have seen in our radiological weapons negotiations this year. It is, therefore, important that we arrive at an intellectual discourse where arguments and interest positions of all sides are weighed and assigned their relative place.

In the same vein, it would be evident that each negotiation has its own internal logic. The scope of regulation of a treaty determines what one can reasonably expect to settle in the same defined negotiating context. In the case of the radiological weapons Working Group, the agenda item under which it has been established and the mandate which it has been given would seem to limit the exercise to the prohibition of one particular weapon of mass destruction, used directly or indirectly. In terms of negotiating methodology, it would therefore appear impracticable to use the radiological weapons treaty as a vehicle for extraneous subject-matters -- outside of the purview of these guiding documents -- only because it is thought that the bargaining situation is right. In the opinion of my delegation, this would imply that the radiological weapons convention is not the place to regulate access to nuclear technology in a broad sense, nor the place to establish new obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament, or to promote the development of civilian nuclear industry in its entirety free from any external threat. Let me elaborate a little upon the peaceful uses demands. Obviously, every treaty needs delineating clauses. A radiological weapons convention should certainly spell out that the existing uses of radioactive material which are not anywhere near the employment of such substances for hostile purposes should remain unaffected by the treaty. But it is a different thing to attempt the establishment of unrelated obligations in this field which may not even be in the competency of the Committee on Disarmament or may have little to do with disarmament itself. If one wishes to broaden access to certain forms of nuclear technology or to strengthen the obligation of technology-holders to contribute to this end, there would certainly be possibilities for intensifying co-operation through the IAEA in Vienna; one could bring one's voice to bear in the preparation of PUNE and work on the strengthening of certain principles in the general negotiating process on science and technology for development in the United Nations. The attempt to win battles on technology that are difficult to win elsewhere cannot succeed in this body. The same is true of the demands relating to nuclear disarmament. Again, this package is too heavy for the vehicle of our radiological weapons treaty. Logically, it is a difficult proposition to request from the nuclear-weapon States -- desirable and legitimate as this may seem by itself -- new obligations on nuclear explosive weapons at the same time as these weapons are expressly excluded from the scope of the treaty.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

In pointing to the incompatibility of certain demands with these accepted tenets of negotiating methodology, I do not wish to lecture any delegation or claim to be the umpire or guardian of our rules of the game. I only wish to make clear -- in descriptive terms -- why certain positions have become the principal obstacles to the successful conclusion of our negotiations on radiological weapons. I have pointed to these incompatibilities because in the present context they appear to be particularly grave. It is generally agreed that the practical relevance of the interdiction of radiological weapons is limited and that the attention of the Committee should not be overly diverted by such a medium-priority item from other more important items. In this sense, last year, I spoke of the radiological weapons convention as "a perishable good" where a premium would seem to be placed on quick and purposeful action. Apart from the basic usefulness of having ticked off one more item on a list of potentially dangerous weapons to be banned for ever, the attraction of the rapid conclusion of a radiological weapons convention lies in the heightened credibility of the Committee on Disarmament. A successfully concluded convention, even on such a limited subject-matter, could contribute to the momentum of the multilateral disarmament process and could show that the Committee is able to act swiftly and diligently. The stagnation, more, the retrograde movement which we now witness, is by the same token a destroyer of credibility. The two deviations from accepted negotiating principles which I have described -- a lack of well-adapted instructions, and the saddling of the future treaty or treaties with extraneous demands -- are not only unfortunate because they will cost us time, but they may well in this sense be self-destructive. The present danger is that the negotiations may just fade away, that the perishable good will indeed perish. Those who want to overburden the treaty vehicle with extraneous demands would then be left without anything. There would be no treaty fulfilling a shared and relevant purpose, and there would be no satisfaction of their specific demands either. If the interest of other parties to a negotiation is overestimated, and one's own demand is formulated in the light of such exaggerated views, failure is certain to occur.

These are unfortunate prospects, and the danger is real. In the opinion of my delegation, however, it can still be averted. Taking a constructive view, I would like to make some suggestions as to how negotiations could possibly be invigorated, and a viable radiological weapons treaty -- both on the side of the "traditional" prohibition of radiological weapons, and on the nuclear facility side -- be elaborated in a relatively short time.

I would like to start from the premise that in both group A and group B there is a broad basic consensus on a good number of things. Those who have put forward collateral demands do not contest the desirability of what the majority of delegations favour, but they want something in addition. In group A, everybody has agreed that radiological weapons should be banned. In group B, there is a broad consensus that four or five categories of civilian nuclear facilities, including nuclear power reactors above a certain power threshold, should be protected from attack. These consensus views should be the starting point for treaty-making.

In group B, the different perspectives might be accommodated in a phase concept. In phase 1, the negotiations would pertain to the particularly dangerous civilian nuclear facilities on the protection of which a consensus exists. Full use could be made of the work accomplished during the last two years in this field. With the main controversial issue temporarily out of sight, the negotiations would probably proceed smoothly, and all could collaborate in a joint effort to provide for the speedy elimination of the admittedly greatest danger, the threat to civilian nuclear facilities with a substantial mass destruction potential.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

In a second phase, the protection of additional installations could be envisaged, as recommended by a number of delegations. There would be an agreement that those delegations which do not attach value to this additional exercise would not object to its being held within the framework of the Committee on Disarmament. It would, however, be possible for delegations not so inclined to abstain from active participation. While the number of effective participants might thus be smaller than in phase 1, there would not appear to be a difference in principle. Even in the present group B, at least one delegation remains absent, while not blocking the work of others, and some delegations have doubts as to their ultimate participation in formal negotiations. A tentative plan could be drawn up for the successive scheduling of the two strands of negotiations, phase 1 and phase 2.

As regards the "traditional" radiological weapons treaty matter, the process may be more difficult to organize as a staggered sequence. Here again, it would be desirable to proceed quickly with the negotiation of a prohibition treaty that would contain the normal delineating clause as to peaceful uses and, preferably in the preamble as part of the general environment in which the treaty is concluded, a proviso recalling the existing obligations of States parties in the field of nuclear disarmament. Such a treaty, to be sure, would not fulfil the aspiration of a number of countries in these two areas, and their demands would have to be dealt with in a different fashion. However, those members of the Committee who have additional wishes would, following the model of the ENMOD Convention, even in the absence of a complete consensus not object to the treaty being forwarded at the appropriate time, once the "linkage" problem is solved. One could think of a joint undertaking to be given by all members of the Committee at the conclusion of negotiations on this treaty text, that the additional demands put forward by a group of delegations should be dealt with bona fide and on their merits, but outside of the formal negotiating process. The Committee could, for instance, agree to suitably broaden the mandate of the radiological weapons Working Group to have a full-fledged discussion of remaining issues of access to nuclear technology, in the context of the radiological weapons subject-matter, with a view to facilitating their consideration, in part by the member States of the Committee to which the demands are addressed, in part by other, more competent international organizations. As regards future additional commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament, this would seem in any event to be lodged under agenda item 2 of the Committee's agenda and should be given appropriate and heightened treatment in that context. It would be important that those members of the Committee who would in this scenario allow the radiological weapons treaty to go forward, notwithstanding their own farther-reaching perspectives, would obtain an acknowledgement of the seriousness of their particular concerns and a procedural compensation allowing them to pursue their aspirations further in an appropriate framework.

These are initial ideas on how the current stalemate in the radiological weapons field might be overcome. They appear to be pertinent at a time when many delegations doubt even the usefulness of re-establishing the radiological weapons Working Group next year and are disenchanted with a process which has seemed so futile this year. My delegation would wish that others join in an earnest search for appropriate methods to instil new hope in these negotiations. That would help to enhance the credibility of our negotiation process and, in full recognition of the limited significance of the radiological weapons subject-matter, provide momentum for arms control in general.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, the exemplary way in which you have been guiding our work would lead one to suppose that you are a veteran of this "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum", to give it the name used in paragraph 120 of the Final Document. Although that is not so, since this is your first contact with our activities, your skill will come as no surprise to anyone who is aware of your brilliant record in the diplomatic service of Peru, a country with which both Mexico and I personally have very close bonds.

It is, therefore, a particular pleasure for me to offer you our warmest congratulations and the co-operation of the delegation of Mexico in the discharge of your important duties.

It is an equal pleasure to reiterate to the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Ahmad, the congratulations we have already had an opportunity to offer him on the masterly way in which he directed the work of the Committee during the month of July.

As regards the item on the prevention of nuclear war, about which I am going to speak, I must begin by pointing out that from a practical point of view the results of the Committee's work in that connection during its 1983 session, which is about to end, may be said to be virtually nil.

True, the States members of the Group of 21 and the socialist States, after two months of persevering efforts -- to illustrate which allow me to recall the statements made by the Mexican delegation in February, March and April of this year, the texts of which can be easily consulted in the verbatim records of the Committee's 197th, 198th, 202nd, 203rd and 216th plenary meetings -- managed to overcome the resistance, as obstinate as it was incomprehensible, of certain other States to the inclusion in the agenda of this subject which merits the maximum priority and which, as was rightly said, involves the vital interests of all the peoples of the world. Although almost in the last moments of the spring part of the Committee's session the opposing delegations felt obliged to abandon their front line of defence, that was only in order to resort more energetically during this part of the session to their delaying and obstructionist tactics, now opposing -- as they have been doing for some time in connection with other items -- the setting up of an ad hoc working group, which would be the most effective instrument for undertaking immediate negotiations "with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war", a task which the General Assembly entrusted specifically to the Committee on Disarmament as "a matter of the highest priority" in its last resolution on the subject, resolution 37/78 I, which, as you will recall, was adopted by 130 votes in favour and none against on 9 December 1982.

In the opinion which the Government of Mexico transmitted to the Secretary-General -- it is reproduced in the Committee's document CD/282 dated 19 April 1982 -- in response to the request formulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 36/81 B of 9 December 1981, the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the subject of the prevention of nuclear war, Mexico stressed that such prevention represented, in the words of the Final Document of 1978, "the most acute and urgent task of the present day".

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The opinion recalled a number of other emphatic declarations contained in the Final Document, such as that "enduring international peace and security cannot be built on the accumulation of weaponry by military alliances nor be sustained by a precarious balance of deterrence or doctrines of strategic superiority"; that "the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today constitutes much more a threat than a protection for the future of mankind"; that "existing arsenals of nuclear weapons alone are more than sufficient to destroy all life on earth" and that "the existence of nuclear weapons" constitutes a "threat to the very survival of mankind".

On the basis of those declarations the communication stated that the few measures in the category "confidence-building measures" which the nuclear-weapon powers had so far managed to agree on, "however laudable they may be, may be termed, within the context of the terrifying situation confronting the world, cosmetic measures" and with the utmost justification the communication made the following categorical assertion:

"What all peoples of the earth whose vital interests are at stake have been awaiting for some time are effective measures which will enable the threat of a nuclear war to be permanently removed. The Government of Mexico is convinced that the recipe for achieving this is very simple: it would be sufficient to take seriously the provisions which were adopted by consensus in 1978 and which were outlined in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament".

Such "effective measures", which basically means the same thing as the "appropriate and practical measures" referred to in the resolution adopted last year by the General Assembly, are to be found in plenty in the Final Document, although, as is done in the Mexican reply, the ones which could unhesitatingly be picked out as the most priority measures for the prevention of nuclear war are those contained in paragraph 47, which says that "it is essential to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race in all its aspects in order to avert the danger of war involving nuclear weapons", and paragraph 50, which sets forth the objectives of the nuclear disarmament agreements the negotiation of which is the most urgent and which together ought to culminate in the "ultimate and complete elimination" of nuclear weapons.

In the rest of this statement I should like to describe five specific measures of this kind which, in addition to being realistic, faithfully reflect the aspirations of mankind.

The first of these measures, which the peoples of the world have been anxiously awaiting for more than a quarter of a century, is the elaboration, through multilateral negotiations, of a treaty on the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests.

The adoption of this measure would mean simply that the three States which are depositaries of the Moscow Treaty signed in 1963 would have finally decided to honour the legally binding commitments they assumed in that Treaty and reaffirmed five years later in the non-proliferation Treaty to "achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time" and to "continue negotiations to this end". A first step in that direction which is urgently necessary is to respond to the appeal addressed to the Committee on Disarmament by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/72 to assign to the Ad Hoc Working Group on item 1 of its agenda "a mandate which should provide for the multilateral negotiation" of the treaty in question.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

This appears all the more necessary and advisable when we remember that, in addition to the numerous reasons set forth by the General Assembly in the resolution I have referred to — among which I may mention the fact that the continuance of testing "will intensify the arms race, thus increasing the danger of nuclear war" and that the treaty in question would constitute "a vital element for the success of efforts to prevent both vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons" — the Committee now has at its disposal, among the many documents which have been submitted to it during its 1983 session, the text of a "draft treaty banning any nuclear-weapon test explosion in any environment" submitted by Sweden (document CD/381), that of the "basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests" submitted by the Soviet Union (document CD/346) and a working paper prepared by the United Kingdom concerning "peaceful nuclear explosions in relation to a nuclear test ban" (document CD/383).

A second measure which would also constitute an important contribution to the prevention of nuclear war would be the implementation of resolution 37/100 B, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 1982, in which it urged the United States and the Soviet Union, as the two major nuclear-weapon States, to proclaim, either through simultaneous unilateral declarations or through a joint declaration, an immediate nuclear arms freeze with the structure and scope described in that resolution.

It is envisaged that the initial duration of the freeze would be five years, with the proviso that that period would be subject to prolongation "in the event of other nuclear-weapon States joining in such a freeze, as the General Assembly expects them to do".

The preamble to that resolution contains various points of special significance, among which I should like to mention the following.

The nuclear arms freeze is not an end in itself. It would, however, constitute the most effective first step that can at present be taken both to prevent any further increase in the vast nuclear arsenals of the two superpowers and to expedite the negotiations towards a substantial reduction and qualitative limitation of existing nuclear weaponry.

In order to dispel in advance any doubts about the strict observance of the undertakings involved in the freeze, the General Assembly provided expressly in its resolution that the freeze would be subject, not only to the relevant measures and procedures of verification already agreed on by the parties in the case of the SALT I and SALT II treaties — which posed verification problems far more complicated than those that might arise in the case of the proposed freeze — but also to those agreed upon in principle by the same parties during the preparatory trilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test ban held at Geneva between 1977 and 1980.

The foregoing, combined with the fact that the freeze would mean halting all activities under any arms programme, has led someone so well versed in the matter as Herbert Scoville, former deputy director of the CIA, to declare that "verification can no longer legitimately be invoked as an excuse for not proceeding towards an agreement on a freeze".

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The General Assembly noted that the conditions prevailing in the world today are a source of even more serious concern than those which existed when the Final Document was adopted five years ago because of various factors such as the deterioration of the international situation, the increase in the accuracy, speed and destructive power of nuclear weapons, the promotion of illusory doctrines of "limited" or "winnable" nuclear war and the many false alarms which have occurred in recent years owing to the malfunctioning of computers which could very well result tomorrow in tragic and incalculable consequences for mankind.

Lastly, the General Assembly stated -- with very good reason, for there are many and very authoritative declarations from the most varied sources supporting its claim -- that "at present the conditions are most propitious for such a freeze, since the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America are now equivalent in nuclear military power and it seems evident that there exists between them an over-all rough parity".

The third measure I should like to suggest here as a very modest step towards the final goal envisaged at the first special session devoted to disarmament and unanimously and categorically reaffirmed in 1982 at the General Assembly's second special session devoted to disarmament, that is to say, the goal of the "complete elimination of nuclear weapons", is that of an undertaking by the nuclear-weapon powers not to be the first to use those terrible instruments of mass destruction.

This could be done in two stages: in the first stage the United States, France and the United Kingdom could solemnly undertake, through unilateral declarations -- like those made by China in 1964 and by the Soviet Union in 1982 -- not to take the initiative in the use of nuclear weapons. If they could do this the result, from the moral, psychological and practical points of view, would be virtually the same as if the five nuclear-weapon powers had become parties to a treaty or convention formally prohibiting the first use of such weapons. It would seem desirable, however, that an additional effort should be made to strengthen that obligation from the strictly legal point of view by incorporating it in an instrument of a kind recognized as being fully binding in the sphere of international law.

Since up to now it has been only in the United States and the European countries members of NATO that the first use of nuclear weapons has been seriously considered as a viable proposition, it is encouraging to note that in recent months many prominent personalities and institutions of that region have either given favourable consideration to the idea or have even gone so far as to propose openly that the United States and the other members of the Atlantic alliance should abandon that strategy. Here are some examples of this trend.

The article published in the 1982 spring issue of the review, Foreign Affairs, by four international experts of the United States of recognized renown in their respective fields, namely, McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara and Gerard Smith; another article published in the New York Times on 10 May 1982 by Egon Bahr, a prominent member of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany; an address given at the National Press Club in Washington on 14 April 1982 by Paul C. Warnke, former Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; an interview with George Ball, former Under-Secretary of State, published in the 7 June 1982 issue of the periodical, The New Yorker; a

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

memorandum submitted to the General Assembly in June 1982 by a group known as the Generals for Peace and Disarmament which includes a field-marshal, a former President of Portugal, 10 retired generals and an admiral, also retired, all of them nationals of countries members of NATO, in which they have held a wide variety of important military posts; the declaration adopted in September 1982, after two successive meetings held in London and Rome in March and June of that year with the participation of representatives of 35 academies of sciences throughout the world, by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, a declaration which includes inter alia the significant words, "We appeal to all nations never to be the first to use nuclear weapons"; the report adopted in 1983 by the "Union of Concerned Scientists", whose headquarters are in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which was drafted with the assistance of a number of generals and admirals including Field-Marshal Lord Carver, Brigadier-General Karl Christian Krause and General Jochen Loser, as well as many experts of the stature of Lord Zuckerman, and which states: "The present first-use strategy will very probably lead to the catastrophe of a nuclear war; it is intellectually and morally unacceptable and internally constitutes a **factor of division** among the nations of the alliance"; the declaration adopted by the Synod of Bishops of the Church of England after a debate which took place on 10 February 1983 in which the Synod stated its belief that "it is a moral obligation of all countries (including the members of NATO) solemnly and publicly to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons in any form whatsoever", and to end this list, which is the product of a very rigorous selection from the wealth of material existing on this subject, the Pastoral Letter on War and Peace approved by the Bishops of the United States on 3 May of this year, which includes, among many other things, the following pithy statement: "We cannot visualize any situation in which the deliberate starting of a nuclear war even on the most limited scale could be morally justified. Any non-nuclear-weapon attack by any other State should be resisted by means that are also non-nuclear . . .".

The fourth measure I should like to propose is one the execution of which depends exclusively on the Committee on Disarmament, for it consists in the establishment, in February next year, of an ad hoc working group to begin without delay multilateral negotiations on the item which has from the beginning occupied the second place on its agenda, namely, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. The work of such a working group would complement that of the working group on the prevention of nuclear war, a closely-connected **subject**, which we are sure will be set up at the beginning of the 1984 session with a mandate corresponding to the instructions contained in the General Assembly's resolution 37/78 I.

The question which forms the subject of item 2 of the Committee's agenda has been under discussion since 1979, the first year of the work of this negotiating body after its constitution with its present membership, and has been dealt with in working papers submitted by the Group of 21 and the Group of socialist States as well as in innumerable statements. Both documents and statements have constantly stressed the urgent need to conduct multilateral negotiations with a view to putting an end to the unbridled arms race referred to in the title of the item. More than two years ago the Group of 21, in its working paper document CD/180, said the following:

"The competitive accumulation of nuclear arms by the nuclear-weapon States cannot be condoned on the grounds that it is indispensable to their security. Such an argument is patently false, considering that the increase in nuclear arsenals, far from contributing to the strengthening of the security of all

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

States, on the contrary weakens it, and increases the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear war. Moreover, the Group of 21 rejects as politically and morally unjustifiable that the security of the whole world should be made to depend on the state of relations existing among nuclear-weapon States."

In the same document the Group reiterated its conviction, already expressed the year before, that the immediate objective of the consideration of item 2 by the Committee should be the establishment of an ad hoc working group with a mandate to elaborate on paragraph 50 of the Final Document and to identify substantive issues, as follows:

- "(i) The elaboration and clarification of the stages of nuclear disarmament envisaged in paragraph 50 of the Final Document including identification of the responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States and the role of the non-nuclear-weapon States in the process of achieving nuclear disarmament;
- (ii) Clarification of the issues involved in prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, pending nuclear disarmament, and in the prevention of nuclear war;
- (iii) Clarification of the issues involved in eliminating reliance on doctrines of nuclear deterrence;
- (iv) Measures to ensure an effective discharge by the Committee on Disarmament of its role as the single multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament and in this context its relationship with negotiations relating to nuclear disarmament conducted in bilateral, regional and other restricted forums".

In spite of these constant efforts and of the fact that the proposal in question, in addition to being supported by the overwhelming majority of the States members of the Committee, has year after year been decisively supported by the General Assembly, the opposition of a small number of States has up to now prevented the establishment of the ad hoc working group in question, which would undoubtedly constitute an effective aid towards the prevention of nuclear war.

The fifth and last measure I should like to recommend is the fusion into a single forum of the two series of bilateral negotiations which have been taking place for some time now in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union, acting, presumably, in consultation with their respective allies, the first series, which began in November 1981, being concerned with the so-called intermediate-range nuclear weapons and the second series, which began in June 1982, being concerned with strategic nuclear weapons.

I should like to add to this suggestion, which might be considered institutional in nature, two other complementary suggestions of the same kind: the first is that the sphere of the negotiations should be broadened to include, in addition to strategic and intermediate-range weapons, what are called "tactical nuclear weapons" of which, as is known, there are some thousands deployed in forward positions in Europe. In this connection I should like to recall that the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues -- also known as the Palme Commission after the name of its Chairman, Olof Palme, now the Prime Minister of Sweden -- in its report entitled "Common security -- a blueprint for survival", made the following observations, among others:

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

"Battlefield nuclear weapons, as well as nuclear air defence systems and atomic demolition munitions, raise important problems of stability. Air defence systems would likely create pressures for delegation of authority to use them before combat actually was initiated. Battlefield weapons also would create pressures for early use in any armed conflict. Their location near the front lines of any war would mean that political leaders may face a choice early in a conflict of either authorizing the use of battlefield weapons or watching them be overrun. Each side's fears that the other side might resort to 'first use' could intensify crises and multiply the dangers of the initiation of nuclear conflict and its escalation."

The Palme Commission concludes this section of its report by stating:

"Security for both sides would improve if these weapons were mutually reduced and withdrawn. These weapons are currently not the subject of East-West negotiations. They should be, and urgently."

My second additional suggestion is that the negotiating superpowers should stop treating the "vital interest" of all the peoples of the world in disarmament negotiations — to which clear reference is made more than once in the Final Document — as some kind of intangible fantasy, the figment of the collective imagination of the United Nations General Assembly.

In order to correct that situation and to give reality to the expression of that interest, even if only symbolically, we believe that it would be desirable for the negotiations between the two superpowers, which would in the future, as I have suggested, be broadened to cover the nuclear trio I have mentioned — strategic weapons, intermediate-range weapons and tactical weapons — to be broadened also as regards the number of participants, through the inclusion among them of a personal representative of the United Nations Secretary-General. His function would be double. On the one hand he would be there in order to safeguard the legitimate interests of the non-nuclear-weapon States which do not belong to either of the two alliances. On the other hand he could also, on occasions, act as a friendly arbitrator, to use the term customarily employed in international law, who would help the two powerful interlocutors to find a way out of the deadlock so frequently reached in their talks, as, alas, seems to have happened at the present time.

We believe that this suggestion of ours ought to be seriously considered by the two superpowers. For it should be borne in mind that, as the General Assembly has emphasized on many occasions and as I have said a number of times today, but I should like to repeat it once more, what is at stake is not solely the national interests of the nuclear-weapon States but, in the last analysis, the vital interests of all the peoples of the world and even the very survival of mankind.

A comparison between the irrevocable objectives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament solemnly enshrined in the Final Document and the conditions at present prevailing in this respect in the international order provokes not only understandable alarm but also justified indignation. The modest arsenals of 1945 which contained only a small number of bombs of very few kilotonnes have grown

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

to a total of some 50,000 nuclear warheads whose destructive power is conservatively estimated at a figure rather higher than that of a million bombs of the kind dropped on Hiroshima, which means that the nuclear arsenals of today are more than enough to annihilate 60 times the total population of the earth.

This situation, justifying both alarm and indignation, was summed up in the working paper of the Group of 21 distributed on 4 February last in document CD/341, the first paragraph of which reads as follows:

"The greatest peril facing the world today is the threat of destruction from a nuclear war, a war which would have devastating results on belligerents and non-belligerents alike. The actions of the nuclear-weapon States which are engaged in a new and frenzied round of the nuclear arms race and attempts by some nuclear-weapon States to promote the highly dangerous concept of a limited nuclear war and to minimize the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons, have greatly increased the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war. Doctrines of nuclear deterrence, far from being the cause of the maintenance of international peace and security, lie at the root of the continuing escalation in the quantitative and qualitative development of nuclear weapons and lead to greater insecurity and instability in international relations. Moreover, such doctrines which are predicated upon the willingness to use nuclear weapons, cannot be the basis for preventing the outbreak of nuclear war. Concern for common security and global survival should be the basis of international peace rather than the concept of deterrence. International peace must be based on a commitment by all States to joint survival rather than a threat of mutual annihilation".

In the light of the foregoing it seems to us that the "appropriate and practical measures" for the prevention of nuclear war to the negotiation of which the General Assembly asked the Committee on Disarmament to give the highest priority, should be measures commensurate with the gravity and imminence of the dangers that are to be averted. No one would think of trying to cure cancer with aspirin tablets or to put out a fire with thimblefuls of water. It is not a question of embarking on an interminable -- if not impossible -- academic exercise, as if we were required to prepare some kind of doctoral thesis on the subject which was supposed to be exhaustive. That would lead us to try to decide -- as I have said once before -- whether the account given in Genesis or Darwin's version were the true story of the origin of man. No. What we should be trying to do here is to make an effective contribution, through the negotiation of concrete measures having the two characteristics mentioned by the General Assembly, to the accomplishment of what the General Assembly rightly called "the most acute and urgent task of the present day". The five measures which my delegation considered it its duty to recommend in this statement are far from constituting a complete list of the measures which might appear desirable. But they are, we are convinced, truly illustrative of the type of measures which the General Assembly and the peoples of the world hope for as the fruit of the multilateral negotiations of the Committee on Disarmament and of the bilateral negotiations which have been taking place in this same city of Geneva which is the seat of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, His Excellency Ambassador de Souza e Silva.

Mr. de SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, I am going to explain very briefly the position of my delegation after recent developments that have taken place in the Committee on the question of the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters.

I was prepared to go along with any fair arrangements of compromise that would enable the Committee on Disarmament to deal seriously with the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. The paper informally presented by our Chairman, unsatisfactory as it may be to my delegation, would nevertheless have met with our approval. Unfortunately, on 11 August, a new document was introduced by the delegation of Belgium which has changed substantially the prospects for the treatment of this subject.

I am sorry to inject a note of personal feeling concerning this paper. I was disappointed. The same delegation of Belgium introduced in this Committee on 25 April, and in the Disarmament Commission in New York last May, another paper on this same subject (document CD/380).

That document was constructive, useful and objective and deserved to be taken as one of the bases for serious discussion on this matter. The paper introduced on 11 August (document CD/411) has very little in common with the previous one. It even closes the door to any dialogue. It shows a state of mind of some western European delegations that was totally unexpected to my delegation. I would be ready to subscribe to the paper introduced on 11 August and discuss it, but not in a governmental negotiating forum. It would be most suitable for a debate in any academy of political science.

For this reason I do not see any useful purpose in pursuing this discussion any further during the current session of the Committee. I think we shall have to wait for the next session of the General Assembly and resume our discussion next year, hopefully under better auspices. Any decision we might take, either of a procedural or of a substantive character, would be meaningless as long as some delegations display such an evident unwillingness to deal concretely with the question of the prevention of nuclear war.

Before concluding, may I take this opportunity to say how much I regret the departure of Ambassador Onkelinx. Since we have been sitting side by side for more than three years, I shall miss his presence here and his valuable contribution to our work. I shall miss his company and most particularly, I shall miss the comments that very discreetly we used to exchange while some debates were going on in this hall.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Ethiopia, Mr. Berhane Deressa, Head of the Department for International Organizations and the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries of the Ethiopian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, whom I warmly welcome to the Committee.

Mr. BERHANE DERESSA (Ethiopia): Thank you Mr. Chairman, for giving me the floor. I came to Geneva to attend the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, which concluded on Saturday morning. Whatever successes may have been recorded in that Conference will hopefully strengthen the efforts we are making in this body to advance the cause of disarmament.

I am a novice in this field and perhaps I carry a face that is new to some assembled here, but my country, Ethiopia, and the delegation I represent today are as old as age can be and have been associated with the disarmament activities of the United Nations from the very beginning. We take pride in this association and in the seriousness of purpose of this Committee, as we share in the sense of frustration felt by many of you, and more particularly by the other non-aligned countries members of this Committee, at the lack of progress in the field of disarmament. It is this common sentiment that compels us to focus our attention on the important work being done in this historical forum, whether we are in Addis Ababa or in Geneva.

The fundamental purpose of the United Nations, as embodied in the succinct phrase at the beginning of the preamble to its Charter, is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ...". Of all the activities undertaken within the framework of this Organization, therefore, the work done in this Committee on Disarmament represents one of the main pivots on which the achievement of the objectives and the ultimate goal of the United Nations depends. The realization of man's most profound aspirations for peace, the pursuit of his well-being and happiness, indeed, the continuity of life on earth are what is at stake. Now, more than at anytime in the turbulent history of this planet, disarmament has undoubtedly become one of the most crucial issues.

It is in recognition of this fact and the central role the community plays in promoting disarmament objectives that I take the liberty of joining you today in your important deliberations. However, as this Committee is about to conclude its work for its current session, I do not intend to take up specific issues relating to the items on its agenda. Let me nevertheless express Ethiopia's profound appreciation of the work done here and reiterate its firm commitment to the lofty objectives pursued in this Committee and share with you our general views on the question of disarmament.

Since Ethiopia became a member of the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee two decades ago, my country has proceeded from the firm belief that nuclear weapons constitute the gravest peril to the survival of humanity. We have, together with like minded members of the international community, attached paramount importance to the achievement of general and complete disarmament, and as a first step towards that end unceasingly called for the cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests. I cannot, therefore, overemphasize the urgency of the need for the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

The growing public awareness of the danger of nuclear war, the campaign in support of measures to prevent nuclear war, to curb the arms race and to bring about disarmament give further evidence of the enormous concern for disarmament throughout the world. The main cause for the lack of progress in disarmament and particularly nuclear disarmament, as we see it, is the militaristic policies of some nuclear-weapon States and their unwillingness

(Mr. Berhane Deressa, Ethiopia)

to master the necessary political will and commitment to the objectives of disarmament. That is why the achievement of the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons tests continues to elude us, despite the untiring efforts of the international community for over three decades.

We are particularly discouraged by recent developments on the question of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and even more to note that despite repeated resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and its request that the Committee on Disarmament should undertake negotiations on such a treaty as a matter of the highest priority, one nuclear-weapon State does not even consider the question to be of such an urgent nature, and has decided to view the issue as a long-term objective. This has not only undermined the efforts being deployed towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty but has also led to the continuance of nuclear-weapon testing, thus endangering the human environment and, in the long run, seriously threatening the survival of life on earth.

We are therefore deeply concerned about the continuing attempts by certain nuclear-weapon States to play down the importance attached to the nuclear test ban and the cessation of the nuclear arms race to which the General Assembly, and indeed the international community at large, have accorded the greatest urgency and highest priority. All nations have both the right as well as the duty to work collectively in order to avert the impending danger of a nuclear holocaust.

The present-day international scene is characterized by an unprecedented build-up of armaments and escalating tensions which continue to render the goal of disarmament more elusive, leading the world ever closer to self-extinction. Confronted with this grim reality, no one with common sense and in his right mind will disagree that the prevention of nuclear war is the most urgent challenge facing mankind today. We must, therefore, ask ourselves in all earnestness whether we are prepared to face this challenge and, within the framework of this Committee, begin serious negotiations on the urgent issues or wait until we are overtaken by events. Unless we take the necessary action to reverse these negative developments and arrest the ever-spiralling nuclear build-up, the ultimate fate of mankind will be complete annihilation. It is, therefore, our sincere hope that the members of this body will exert every effort effectively to discharge the mandate entrusted to them and to live up to the expectations of the international community.

In fulfilling this objective, the Committee, in our view, should not hesitate to create or establish the institutional machinery that is required to advance its work. In this connection, we see no legitimate reason why the Committee could not have an appropriate ad hoc working group that would facilitate its negotiating activities.

As the representative of Ethiopia, a country which was one of the first victims of aggression through the indiscriminate use of chemical weapons against its defenceless population, some 50 years ago, it is with a sense of great anguish that I refer to the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons that have continued unabated despite our best efforts within the United Nations. We therefore place high hopes on the early conclusion of a chemical weapons convention. In this connection, even though intensive work has been done during the present session of this Committee, some important differences continue to impede the attainment of our common objective. We must collectively strive to remove these difficulties with a view to achieving the long-awaited conclusion of a treaty banning chemical weapons.

(Mr. Berhane Deressa, Ethiopia)

We also attach great importance and urgency to concluding an agreement or agreements to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons. Past experience have shown how difficult it is to eliminate weapons once they are developed and deployed. It is also in keeping with this principle that efforts towards keeping outer space free from military use should be intensified. With rapid advances in space technology, further delay would make the task of achieving the objective of preventing an arms race in outer space much more difficult.

Ethiopia continues to express its support for a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons. A number of questions which have significant implications for such a convention have been under very intensive consideration by the contact groups established by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Radiological Weapons. Although a convention of a cogent nature should be welcomed to prevent the production of new weapons of mass destruction, it is unfortunate that the conclusion of such a convention has to be delayed.

Everyone is aware of the danger and serious threat that the capability of South Africa to produce nuclear weapons and its reported development of a cruise missile and various delivery systems pose to the security of Africa, and indeed to international peace. South Africa's record of violence and repression resulting from the policies and actions of the apartheid system, as well as its continued intimidation, subversion and unprovoked military aggression and ceaseless attacks against neighbouring States exacerbate the very grave danger arising from the acquisition of nuclear weapons by that racist regime. We wish to stress once again Africa's grave concern about the acquisition of a nuclear armament by the racist regime and reiterate our demand to those Western countries which co-operate with the racist regime immediately and unconditionally to terminate their nuclear collaboration with Pretoria. We also wish to underline the necessity for all States to uphold and respect the collective decision of the African States as well as the United Nations regarding the denuclearization of Africa.

I would like to touch very briefly on a subject of a general nature. There is a marked and increasing tendency in international relations to use or to threaten to use military force. The policy of force, threat and interference in the internal affairs of other States must be firmly renounced by all States and every effort must be made to counter the notion of the use or threat of use of force as a means of resolving differences in international affairs. Those who have blind faith in the use or threat of use of military force deserve our strongest condemnation.

As long as some major Powers base their policies on the intimidation of States, in particular those that show any semblance of independence and non-alignment, efforts at promoting disarmament and international peace and security will continue to be frustrated.

Furthermore, it is our considered view that the basic problem in the field of disarmament is much less one of the inadequacy of international machinery than it is a question of the lack of political goodwill. Ethiopia considers that the Committee will be able to do meaningful work only if it is allowed to function as a negotiating forum and if all members display their readiness for negotiation. But so long as a few can hinder the work of the Committee, no highly specialized or enlarged delegations can add vitality to its activities.

(Mr. Berhane Deressa, Ethiopia)

In conclusion, may I state that my country, which is irrevocably committed to the earliest possible achievement of social justice at home, also considers it imperative that meaningful and effective steps should be taken to eliminate economic oppression and social injustice without which the building and maintenance of peace and progress towards general and complete disarmament will remain elusive.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Ethiopia for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

I have no other speakers on my list for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

Mr. NOIRFALISSE (Belgium) (translated from French): I should like to welcome the presence in the Committee of Mr. Berhane Deressa, Head of the Department for International Organizations and the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries of Ethiopia. I should also like to tell Ambassador de Souza how much I personally was touched by his very kind words about my country's Ambassador, which I shall not fail to communicate to him. I think Ambassador Onkelinx will have the opportunity to address the Committee once more in plenary meeting at this session.

I was somewhat concerned at the statement just made to us by the Ambassador of Brazil.

He referred to document CD/411 which, I would point out, is not solely a Belgian document but one which the Ambassador of Belgium presented also on behalf of the delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, Australia, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands. The purpose of the document is to contribute to the organization of our work on the subject of the prevention of nuclear war. In that sense it is comparable with the document submitted by the German Democratic Republic -- document CD/406 -- which Ambassador de Souza did not deem it necessary to refer in his statement.

The fact that Belgium felt able to associate itself with the methodological proposals described in document CD/411 ought, it seems to me, to be sufficient proof that there is no incompatibility between that approach and the more detailed approach envisaged in document CD/380 presented by my country on the subject of confidence-building measures in the nuclear sphere.

It is because we do not wish in any way to prejudge the results of the consideration of the concept of the prevention of nuclear war that we believe it is essential to proceed first of all to the identification of what might ultimately be negotiable by the Committee. Such an exercise would not be comparable with "a debate in an academy of political science" but a perfectly normal part of the work of pre-negotiation, entirely within the competence of the Committee. Far from "closing the door to any dialogue", document CD/411 permits just such a general consideration. All delegations can find in it the proposals they have made in the sphere of the prevention of nuclear war, and which I presume they expect to be given serious study by the Committee. That, at any rate, is what we hope as regards our proposal concerning confidence-building measures in the nuclear sphere, and I should like in this connection to reiterate the satisfaction of my country's authorities at the interest in this proposal evinced by the Brazilian delegation as, indeed, by many other States members of the Committee on Disarmament.

(Mr. Noirfalisse, Belgium)

The concern I expressed at the outset is due to the fact that the distinguished representative of Brazil considers that the negotiating effort on this question of the prevention of nuclear war is over for this session. Yesterday, at the meeting of co-ordinators, Ambassador Onkelinx of Belgium submitted on behalf of the western group new proposals which would ensure both in 1983 and in 1984 the consideration of this item of the agenda by the Committee on Disarmament. This proposal is still being considered by delegations for the purposes of the next meeting of the co-ordinators, which will precede the informal meeting of our Committee tomorrow afternoon.

Since this consideration is still under way, I do not think it would be appropriate, at this stage and in a plenary meeting, for me to draw any conclusions.

My delegation hopes that these efforts, which should continue today and tomorrow, will have a successful outcome, and that they will at last enable the Committee on Disarmament to take the necessary decisions so that it can begin, this time in substance, a consideration of this question of the prevention of nuclear war, to which my country attaches the very highest importance.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement.

My consultations with members of the Committee with reference to the date of closure of this year's session indicate that there is a general desire to consider Friday, 26 August, as the Committee's last working day. Can I therefore consider that the Committee is in agreement on Friday, 26 August, as the date of closure of the session?

If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Committee agrees to that date.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): I should like to inform the Committee that yesterday the secretariat placed in delegations' boxes Working Papers Nos. 101, 102 and 103 which contain technical sections of the draft annual report as well as draft substantive paragraphs on two items of the agenda, namely, items 2 and 5. Further working papers will shortly be circulated with reference to the items on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, which are still the subject of consultation.

The secretariat has also circulated, at my request, a revised time-table of meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for this week. You will recall that we had decided to hold an informal meeting at 3 o'clock this afternoon to consider certain organizational questions, in the hope that the Committee would be prepared to adopt decisions on them. However, further consultations with the

(The Chairman)

groups are to be held tomorrow at 3 p.m. In these circumstances, I plan to hold the informal meeting in this conference room tomorrow at 4 p.m. In view of the need to consider the draft annual report, the plenary meeting on Thursday will be brought forward to 9.30 a.m. and will be followed by another informal meeting to consider the technical parts of the report, which are contained in Working Paper No. 101.

You will also notice that the time-table includes an additional meeting for the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban as well as one additional meeting each for the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons and the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, if they prove to be necessary.

I should also like to inform the Committee that in view of the need to conclude our work by 26 August, it is essential for all the working groups to adopt their reports by the end of this week so that the technical services of the secretariat can translate and circulate them in time for their adoption at the plenary meeting on Tuesday, 23 August 1983. If the working groups' reports are not completed by 19 August, there will be delays in translation and we shall have to adopt the reports before they have been translated into all languages.

I take it, then, that the Committee is prepared to adopt the revised time-table.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Spanish): The next plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 18 August, at 9.30 a.m. The Committee will, then, also hold an informal meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, 17 August, at 4 p.m., to consider the organizational proposals concerning the subjects of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.