

COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.216
28 April 1983
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 April 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. F. van Dongen

(Netherlands)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

<u>Algeria:</u>	Mr. A. TAFFAR
<u>Argentina:</u>	Mr. J.C. CARASALES Mr. GARCIA MORITAN
<u>Australia:</u>	Mr. R. STEELE Mr. T. FINDLAY
<u>Belgium:</u>	Mr. ONKELINX Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE Mr. P. BERG Ms. HARROY
<u>Brazil:</u>	Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA Mr. S. QUEIROZ DUARTE
<u>Bulgaria:</u>	Mr. L. GOTZEV Mr. K. TELLALOV
<u>Burma:</u>	U MAUNG MAUNG GYI U TIN KYAW HLAING U THAN TUN
<u>Canada:</u>	Mr. McPHAIL Mr. G.R. SKINNER Miss C. de VARENNES
<u>China:</u>	Mr. LI LUYE Mr. TIAN JIN Mrs. GE YUYUN Mrs. WANG ZIYANG
<u>Cuba:</u>	Mr. SOLA VILA Mr. P. NUNEZ MOSQUERA
<u>Czechoslovakia:</u>	Mr. M. VEJVODA Mr. A. CIMA

Egypt:

Mr. EL REEDY
Mr. I.A. HASSAN
Mr. A.M. ABBAS

Ethiopia:

Mr. T. TERREFE
Ms. K. SINEGIORGIS

France:

Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE
Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. H. THIELICKE

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. W. ROHR

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES
Mr. T. TOTH

India:

Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia:

Mr. N. WISNOEMERTI
Mr. I.H. WIRAATMADJA

Iran:

Mr. F. SHAHABI SIRJANI

Italy:

Mr. M. ALESSI

Japan:

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

Kenya:

Mr. D.D.C. DON NANJIRA

Mexico:

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

Mongolia:

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

Morocco:

Mr. A. SKALLI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI
Mr. O. HILLIE

Netherlands:

Mr. F. VAN DONGEN
Mr. J. RAMAKER
Mr. R.J. AKKERMAN

Nigeria:

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

Pakistan:

Mr. AHMAD

Peru:

Mr. P. CANNOCK
Mr. V. ROJAS

Poland:

Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. T. STROJWAS
Mr. G. CZEMPINSKI

Romania:

Mr. I. DATCU
Mr. T. MELESCANU
Mr. L. TOLDER

Sri Lanka:

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

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. C.M. HYLTIENIUS
Mrs. SUNDBERG

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

Mr. B.P. NOBLE

Miss J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

Mrs. M. HOINKES

Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER

Mr. J. HOGAN

Mr. R. HORNE

Venezuela:

Mr. LOPEZ OLIVER

Mr. T. LABRADOR RUBIO

Mr. A. ABREU

Mr. O. GARCIA

Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mrs. ESAKI-EKANGA KABEYA

NON-MEMBER STATE

Senegal:

Mr. A. SENE

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

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the
Committee on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 216th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

The Committee continues today its consideration of the question of the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, inscribed as part of item 2 of the agenda of the Committee. As usual, members of the Committee wishing to do so 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 Canada, Venezuela, Belgium, the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Mexico, France and Senegal. The distinguished representative of Venezuela, in the — we hope, temporary — absence of the first speaker on the list, has been kind enough to declare his willingness to lead off in today's debate and the Chair is pleased to give him the floor. You have the floor, Ambassador Lopez.

Mr. LOPEZ OLIVER (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, allow me to offer you the greetings of my delegation and my congratulations on the skilful way in which you have been guiding the work of this Committee.

It is all the greater a pleasure for me to offer you these congratulations in that the relations between the Netherlands and Venezuela have traditionally been, as they still are, harmonious.

I should also like to offer congratulations and gratitude to the distinguished Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco who, during his period of chairmanship, was able to combine his gifts as a diplomat and as a humanist and achieve, in this difficult negotiating forum, successes which enabled us to adopt the agenda for the 1983 session.

I should like, too, with great pride as a Latin American, to congratulate Ambassador Alfonso García Robles, Nobel Peace Prize winner, whose tenacity and presence do honour to this Committee.

In making this statement on behalf of Venezuela before the foremost disarmament negotiating body, I feel obliged at the outset to draw the attention of its distinguished members to a fact which gives me great concern, as I am sure it does all of you: we are only hours away from the conclusion of the spring part of our session, and in all honesty we have to admit that we have achieved little or nothing during this period.

This deplorable situation persuades me nevertheless to reiterate — to reaffirm — the confidence of my Government and my country in this Committee, in its undoubted usefulness and in the need to ensure that its efforts are more fruitful. Because we are a professedly and demonstrably peaceful country, we believe in the Committee on Disarmament as an adequate instrument for the achievement of agreements which will liberate mankind from the threat of war and total annihilation.

We believe in this body because we believe in the essential sociability of men.

But we are equally convinced that confidence should not exclude rationality and that therefore faith in the destiny of mankind must be based on reason in order that it may bear fruit.

(Mr. Lopez Oliver, Venezuela)

It is reason, then, which impels us, as a peaceful country, a small country, a country of the third world, to claim for those who, like ourselves, have neither the intention nor the means of causing the holocaust of war, the right that our destiny, in common with that of many other countries like Venezuela and, indeed, the destiny of mankind as a whole, should not be dependent on the fluctuations in the relations prevailing between those who, as Dr. Luis Herrera Campins, the President of Venezuela, said before the United Nations General Assembly, like mythological deities, possess the power to destroy mankind.

On the basis of this reason and in exercise of this right, we demand from those who possess such power an attitude consonant with the greater responsibility which that power confers.

We demand from the great powers, from the nuclear-weapon States, a constructive attitude which demonstrates to the world that there is the possibility, through a concerted effort and sincere and wise action, of avoiding general and total destruction.

We contribute daily, in this forum and outside it, the effort we believe due from us in our desire for peace. In the same way, and in so far as we desire peace and believe that we are entitled to it, we demand from the major Powers their greater contribution, in this body and elsewhere, in order to make peace an attainable goal.

Only such an attitude can guarantee a correct choice between the alternatives now confronting civilization.

For the world today is indeed at a crossroads: it must choose between deterrence and dialogue, between a balance of terror and negotiation.

But — and I am not the first to say this — the theory of deterrence is in itself a paradox. It is based on a simple but contradictory principle: the object of deterrence is to prevent the use of nuclear weapons, but it cannot exclude that possibility without annulling itself. Consequently, the means it employs to ensure that nuclear weapons are not used is precisely that of convincing the adversary that they could be used against him.

It is in this contradiction, in this elementary absurdity, that lies the cause of the present situation which is apparently irremediable, according to Bertrand Russell, because it permits a certain low level of rationality which leads each side to believe that the other will attack it if it has good hopes of victory, although as everyone knows full well, there can be no victory in a nuclear war; each side is convinced that its weapons can deter the other from attacking it, with the result that reciprocal fears increase, and neither wants to be left behind in the nuclear arms race. Neither acts in a conciliatory manner, but threateningly, because it believes that the former behaviour would be interpreted as a sign of fear, which would encourage aggressiveness.

This situation, Bertrand Russell said, is exactly like that which used to exist in the era of duels, when two men, neither of whom wanted to kill or be killed, found themselves compelled to do so for fear of being labelled cowards. Private duels no longer occur, but the international duel remains, with exactly the same absurd psychology.

The survival of the human race today depends on this absurd psychology.

(Mr. Lopez Oliver, Venezuela)

Whence the need to talk, to choose dialogue, that is, negotiation, in order to achieve disarmament, and thereby peace. And that, after all, is what we are here for.

However, as Pope John Paul II said in his message of 1 January 1983 entitled "Dialogue for peace, the urgent need of our time", dialogue presupposes certain conditions without which there can be no genuine agreement.

Dialogue must imply a search for the good and the just for the benefit of all men, including adversaries, even in the midst of tensions, confrontations and conflicts. Consequently dialogue calls for openness and receptiveness, being heard but listening to the other, each one recognizing the difference and identity of the other.

Genuine dialogue is, above all, a search for the good through peaceful means, for it is based on respect for human life.

Dialogue is, lastly, according to His Holiness, a bet laid on the sociability of men. I should like to think that we are convinced of the need to lay this bet and to win it.

We who are engaged in the business of negotiating on disarmament are at bottom no more than such gamblers.

We have been entrusted with the means of trying to reach a certain goal: disarmament, which in turn is a means towards another end, that of security, which is not an end in itself but also a means towards a higher end, that of peace.

If, maintaining this graded distinction between means and end, we accept that national objectives in the matter of security are not incompatible but complementary ways of attaining the goal of international security, and that that is the road to peace, the promised land which, according to St. Exupery, we all want to reach, although by different routes, I am sure that day by day we shall achieve greater and better results through negotiation.

And if, finally, we accept the saying of Pope John XXIII that "development is the new name of peace", I am sure that a new international economic order awaits us when we emerge from the present crisis, which is daily widening the gap between poor and rich countries, between poor and rich people, which, by maintaining injustice at every level, puts off the possibility of dialogue, and of peace and brings nearer that of war and destruction.

Convinced of these ideas, my country wishes to reiterate its profound desire and willingness to continue the work of negotiation in this Committee and wherever it may be necessary to negotiate.

Convinced of the merit of these ideas, we shall always be in favour of intelligent dialogue in all spheres in which it is necessary to negotiate for the sake of disarmament and peace, contributing our quota of confidence and reason and demanding likewise the confidence and the rationality which the present hour calls for.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Lopez Oliver for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the Chairman for the month of March and to the Chairman for the month of April, and now calls on the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador McPhail, to take the floor. The floor is yours, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. McPHAIL (Canada): At this, the last meeting in the spring session of our 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament, I want to make some general comments on a number of matters on our agenda. We have been perhaps one of the more silent delegations in the Committee proper during this spring period, but that is because we have been putting some of our efforts outside, and as Chairman of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons, I thought it might also be useful this morning to share with members of the Committee a brief aperçu of where the work stands in relation to the goals that have been set. Before doing so, I want to join other speakers who have recognized the very strong leadership you have brought to the role of Chairman of the Committee during the month of April, following what was, we all agree, a both exemplary and successful effort on the part of your predecessor, Ambassador Ali Skalli of Morocco. Such leadership is always needed in this Committee, but it has been particularly welcome at this juncture in the negotiations of the Committee on Disarmament.

The Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, was among the many distinguished visitors who addressed the Committee this session. The title of his address was "Mutual security: negotiations in 1983", and here I stress both parts of the title, for to be successful, negotiations in the field of arms control must be based on the principle of mutual security. In the Canadian view, the concept of mutual security applies as much to multilateral negotiations, such as those conducted in this forum, as to the bilateral negotiations which are also taking place in Geneva. It is in this context that the Deputy Prime Minister called 1983 a crucial year. This is true for both bilateral and multilateral negotiations, and in both, mutual security must be the recognized basis for negotiation.

Considerations of mutual security, while spanning the range of activities dealt with by the Committee on Disarmament, are particularly relevant to three specific matters. These are those which in 1983 are counted among the principal focuses of the Committee. I refer to the subjects of a nuclear test ban, outer space and chemical weapons.

We have said that Canada is not convinced that nuclear weapons testing should go on for ever, nor at its current disturbing pace. Restrictions on the number and yield of tests should be possible, as well as on the geographical locations of testing sites. To existing nuclear testing agreements could be added further agreements which would move towards the objective of an eventual test-ban treaty. We have also said that there is a need to generate some movement in the negotiating process.

The Committee on Disarmament has the opportunity to generate this movement, either as we or as others have defined it. In the long process of debate before the nuclear test-ban Working Group was finally established last year, the creation of the Working Group became something of an end in itself: in this regard, we continue to believe that the Working Group should be viewed as a means to an end, and that the

(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

work programme of the Group should be constructed accordingly. We of course welcomed the establishment of the nuclear test-ban Working Group, for overcoming this hurdle seemed to provide a chance to focus the energies of the Committee on more productive — that is, more substantive — channels towards the goal of a test-ban treaty. The degree to which the world community shares this goal is evidenced by successive United Nations resolutions.

It now seems that we are close to agreement on a programme of work — and tomorrow will tell whether this agreement is achieved. If this is the case, my delegation will be prepared to participate in our summer sitting in an active way on work towards a nuclear test ban. In this regard, I want to address a closely related matter — the seismic experts Group, also scheduled to meet this summer. I want to recall that Canada has made new funding available for the acquisition of computing and seismograph facilities, and for recruitment of new staff to take a full part in the data exchange experiments devised by the seismic experts Group: Canada will be expanding further its work in the general field of seismic verification research. As the Canadian Deputy Prime Minister indicated, we believe that the next important step in the work of the seismic experts Group is the planning and implementation of a large-scale experimental global exchange of seismic data. We are looking forward to participating in this further work this summer.

Mutual security is also a critical theme in this Committee's consideration of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Outer space has been defined as a Canadian priority for 1983. For a number of years in the General Assembly, Canada has urged that attention be given to this subject. Let me be clear. Our objective is the prohibition of all weapons for use in outer space. Mr. MacEachen called on this Committee to begin as soon as possible its essential task of defining the legal and other issues necessary to build upon the existing outer space regime. Perhaps one of the most logical issues to treat first is that of defining what a future treaty or treaties would include. Presumably the definition should encompass space-based and ground-based systems, and should include any type of weapon not prohibited by the outer space Treaty. The definition should presumably be as broad as possible, and be sufficiently precise so as not to conflict with other categories of armaments. As we progress, it may be decided that we should concentrate initially on one category of weapons, if a broader definition would unduly delay progress toward our objective.

The main problem the Committee will face, however, will undoubtedly be that of verifying any prohibition on which we may wish to agree. The technical problems involved are daunting, for example, in determining whether a vehicle in space — or a system on the ground apparently designed for use in space — does in fact contravene the prohibitions of an agreement. Canadian experts are attempting to determine how the problem can be dealt with, and we shall share any promising results of their research with other delegations in this Committee.

The Canadian delegation will co-operate fully, Mr. Chairman with the contact group that will be consulting under your guidance and that of your successor in this regard. This contact group is charged with clarifying the objectives and tasks of an eventual working group on arms control and outer space, with a view to reaching consensus on the creation of a working group and its mandate. The objective is to reach agreement during the course of our summer session, and we intend, in co-operation with others, to work actively toward this objective so that the option of arming outer space may be closed off.

(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

I hardly need emphasize the priority Canada attaches to the expeditious conclusion of an agreement banning chemical weapons. We have been entrusted with a special responsibility by the Committee, and I assure you I intend to make good the confidence the Committee has placed in me as Chairman of the chemical weapons Working Group, and I want now for a few moments to speak in that capacity.

Perhaps the opening statement from the Chair to the Working Group on 6 April bears some repetition: "The goal of the Group is to achieve the negotiation of a verifiable convention banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and requiring the destruction of existing stockpiles and means of production, thus finally eliminating the threat of the use of these terrible weapons in war for all time.". I do not predict that this far-reaching goal will be wholly achieved during 1983, but at this stage I make no prediction either that we shall fail to reach such a conclusion. Certainly the process can be moved forward in a most substantial way. Great progress has been achieved under the Chairmanships of Japan, Sweden and Poland during the past three years; and as delegations on all sides lately have pointed out, we are now poised to move into a highly productive final phase of these negotiations. That is the challenge before us in 1983.

I am satisfied that we are moving towards this goal. The late start of the Working Group prevented us from moving as quickly as we should have liked in tackling many of the key issues, and hard negotiations lie ahead. This is to say that the test of the chemical weapons Working Group to make real and substantive progress lies in the summer session when the hardest negotiations will begin, when concessions must be made, and when difficult choices must be taken if we are to progress further: the Working Group, in the opinion of its Chairman, is now at the stage where it must be prepared to confront these matters.

On substantive issues before the Working Group, areas of consensus and also areas where further work needs to be done have been identified, with a view to providing a focus for our negotiations. Areas of consensus include many aspects related to the question of scope; equally, there is basic agreement on a number of definitions. Co-operation and confidence-building measures also have a good foundation for consensus as these measures are elaborated; and there is a general pattern of agreement on many matters concerning the duties of compliance organizations. There is, in addition, sufficient agreement on the preamble and concluding articles of a chemical weapons convention to suggest that the remaining issues related to them can be effectively dealt with when the time comes.

But there are also areas of divergence, and it is here that our work must be most intense. The principal areas where consensus is lacking are the following:

Certain definitions, especially of precursors and key precursors, as they relate to the preparation and use of lists for purposes of determining levels of prohibition or control and verification procedures;

(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

Destruction of existing stocks — scope, declarations, timings and monitoring;

Destruction of existing means of production — scope, declarations, timings and monitoring;

Non-production — scope, declarations, timings and monitoring;

Compliance provisions, particularly challenge methods and fact-finding procedures;

Provisions for the prohibition of use and the verification of alleged use.

These matters of substance, and other issues as well, including problems and approaches in recording areas of consensus (and differences) have been examined by the Working Group in its short period this session. Besides the regular Working Group meetings, three contact groups — on existing stockpiles, on the issue of non-compliance, and on the prohibition of use — were established under the Chairmanships of Poland, Brazil and the Netherlands respectively. The Working Group yesterday received oral reports from the Chairmen on progress so far, and while quite clearly, work is far from complete, no insurmountable obstacles have yet appeared. These three contact groups, the Working Group agreed, will continue their activities into the summer session, and I am confident that they will prove equal to the task of dealing with some of the tougher issues which will confront us then.

We, I think, know what the end product is that we are seeking to achieve this year. I will attempt to move the negotiations forward as fast as possible but I do not pretend to believe that we will manage to solve all the major issues. I hope that we can produce a document setting out in reasonable form all of the material where agreement has been reached and, where possible, to indicate by various techniques, via areas, where agreement remains to be achieved. Hopefully, this will show clearly what further negotiations may be needed and also where the Committee may then proceed with the final elaboration of a text.

There are many items on our agenda which I have not touched on. One of the most pressing is the manner in which work in this Committee has been conducted. All of us agree that progress in substantive matters should not be subordinated to procedural or other such matters, which remain continuing preoccupations of this body. We would all agree that such matters before the Committee should serve the Committee's work and not the other way around. With this in mind, we agree whole-heartedly with those who look to strengthening this year the Committee's modus operandi and again, Sir, we offer our co-operation with efforts to achieve constructive change.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador McPhail, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the previous Chairman and to the present Chairman, and now calls on the distinguished representative of Belgium, Ambassador Onkelinx, to take the floor.

Mr. ONKELINX (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, this will no doubt be the last meeting of our Committee which you will preside over. My delegation has already congratulated you on your assumption of that office and I should like, in a few brief words because the list of speakers today is long, to tell you what a pleasure it has been to work under your guidance. You have shown this past month and confirmed to us your brilliant qualities as a diplomat, and you have conducted our work with a great deal of skill, intelligence and wisdom, and for this we must thank you very much. I think that it will also be the last meeting at which Ambassador Gerhard Herder will be with us, and I should like to take this opportunity to bid him farewell. Although in our work the positions we have defended have not always -- far from it -- been identical, my delegation has always found in him an intelligent, friendly and courteous interlocutor, and we have succeeded, even, sometimes, at difficult moments, in maintaining very friendly relations, and I should like to wish him good luck in the very important functions his Government has entrusted to him.

I shall not seize the occasion of the conclusion of this winter session of the Committee on Disarmament to try to draw up a balance-sheet. Our work has unfortunately been too limited for such an exercise to have any meaning at the present time. I shall confine myself, therefore, to deferring to our summer session our hopes for progress in the various spheres with which we are concerned here.

Our programme of work requires us to give special attention this week to the question of the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. The subject of the prevention of nuclear war to some extent gives a new dimension to the work of the Committee. Thus what we ought to do first is to define its limits. My delegation believes that this should be done at informal meetings which the Committee on Disarmament should hold on this question during its summer session.

At the very beginning of this session, I spoke of the great importance which Belgium attaches to the discussion of this issue.

The specific reference to it in the Committee's agenda undoubtedly constitutes a positive fact, although it is regrettable that the Committee should have been obliged to spend nearly two months in settling this procedural issue, to the detriment of the work of substance we hoped for, both on this question and on the other items on the Committee's agenda.

It seems to us essential, however, if we are to do useful work, that the discussions that will take place at these meetings should be structured according to the principal elements that the concept of the prevention of nuclear war may contain.

I believe that there should be great flexibility in the elaboration of that structure. Since it will be a first consideration of the subject, the proposals of all delegations ought systematically to be taken into account and, where necessary, grouped together to facilitate their consideration. But in any case the devising of a method for dealing with the question of the prevention of nuclear

(Mr. Onkelinx, Belgium)

war ought to be no more than an introduction to our work. I earnestly hope that that task will not be the occasion for a new procedural wrangle. We can make headway in this matter only if we approach it without prejudice, which always limits the capacity for mutual comprehension and consequently the possibilities for reaching positive results.

It seems to my delegation that document CD/357, which my colleague from the Federal Republic of Germany presented to the Committee on Disarmament on 29 March last, offers a general framework which could serve precisely to structure our work. It is certainly the most exhaustive document yet submitted on the subject of the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. All the proposals made up to now, whatever their source, have a place within this framework. I therefore believe that, far from distracting attention from the essential questions, this document sets the idea of the prevention of nuclear war in its true context and gives a general indication of its content.

In examining the different components of the prevention of nuclear war we ought to ensure that the Committee does not become involved in discussions which, by their political and legal nature, duplicate those held in other United Nations bodies. We ought therefore to make sure of defining the precise contribution which the Committee on Disarmament can make as effectively as possible in response to the growing concern of the international community with regard to the prevention of nuclear war.

It is against this background that I should like to place document CD/380 which Belgium puts before the Committee today and which representatives found on their desks this morning at the beginning of the meeting.

In submitting this document we are advocating a very practical approach to the prevention of nuclear war. For we are not convinced that lengthy theoretical discussions will enable the Committee to achieve results. Nor do we believe that an excess of comment, and at times polemics, on the negotiations in the nuclear sphere that are also taking place at the present time in this city are useful to the Committee on Disarmament. On the contrary, we think they are harmful to those negotiations, which nevertheless we all hope will be successful.

On the other hand, we believe that the practical approach to the prevention of nuclear war offers far more promising prospects for the Committee on Disarmament and therefore for the international community. This approach can be expressed principally through measures designed to create confidence in the nuclear sphere. Such measures are a prime element in the whole complex of measures designed to bring about the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, and contribute to the attainment of the goal of nuclear disarmament itself. Furthermore, a gradual convergence of views appears to be developing as to the merit of considering this question further.

A number of recent declarations of position and statements confirm us in this view.

India, for example, in document CD/309, referred to "appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war".

(Mr. Onkelinx, Belgium)

The delegation of the Soviet Union, for its part, in its statement of 24 March last, said that it was ready to consider such concrete measures at the multilateral level, taking into account, of course, the efforts being made at the bilateral level. Similarly, on 12 April last, the President of the United States reiterated that his country's aim was to reduce the risk of nuclear war, and he suggested various practical measures, one of which was of a multilateral character.

Document CD/380 stresses the value of implementing practical measures.

It contains an illustrative list of measures which could form the subject of negotiations in this connection.

We have grouped these measures into six main categories:

Information on nuclear matters, which would give a better idea of the defence effort being made in the nuclear sphere. Such information could therefore have a moderating effect on the nuclear arms race;

Notifications concerning nuclear activities. Such notifications would also help to reduce the risk of misperceptions or misunderstandings;

The prevention of nuclear accidents;

The behaviour of nuclear-weapon States;

Consultations in the event of a crisis;

Communications.

With respect to each of these categories, we have indicated the bilateral agreements in force, for such agreements exist.

We believe that there exists also a wide range of possibilities for the adoption of new instruments of a multilateral character involving all the nuclear-weapon States but -- and this is a very important point -- without prejudice to the positions of each on nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

If the Committee on Disarmament were to follow this course, the non-nuclear-weapon States, too, would be able to make any suggestions they might consider useful in this connection.

It would of course be for the Committee to decide on the most suitable procedures for the elaboration of an international agreement or international agreements on these questions.

We hope that the recess in our work will give delegations an opportunity to think about these suggestions, so that when we resume our activities in June we can tackle the question of the prevention of nuclear war with specific aims in mind, and identify those areas where the Committee on Disarmament can make the most practical contribution.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Onkelinx for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to it, and now invites the next speaker on the list, the distinguished representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Issraelyan, to take the floor.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Mr. Chairman, the Soviet delegation has taken the floor in order to offer some comments on and evaluations of the results of the first part of the Committee's 1983 session.

Our work has taken place in an exceptionally difficult international situation when, as a result of the further stepping up of the activities of the forces of militarism and aggression, the course of world events has assumed an even more ominous character. As Mr. Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, said in reply to questions from the magazine Der Spiegel, "The difficulty and danger of the present situation resides in the fact that the arms race imposed by the West is outrunning negotiations".

Much could be said about the negative consequences of the ruinous arms race for present and future generations of mankind, and much has been said in this chamber during the past three months. What the Soviet delegation wants to say today is that the difficulty of the international situation and the problems threatening the very existence of mankind are not, in our view, a reason for despair and pessimism but ought rather to encourage us all to continue negotiating and making constructive efforts to find a way of limiting the arms race while heeding the security interests of all States members of the international community and of the international community itself as a whole.

In this connection the delegation of the Soviet Union has continued its efforts during the current session to contribute to the success of the negotiations within the framework of our Committee. On the central disarmament issue -- that of the prevention of nuclear war -- the Soviet delegation, together with the overwhelming majority of other delegations, strove determinedly for the inclusion of this question in the Committee's agenda and the setting up of an ad hoc working group on the subject, so that the Committee can proceed to the elaboration of concrete and practical measures to safeguard the international community from a mortal danger. We were also co-sponsors of the working paper of the group of socialist countries containing substantial proposals on this key issue in international life.

The Soviet delegation has also adopted a constructive position on another priority issue on our agenda -- the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. We submitted a draft treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and are ready to engage in negotiations taking into account all existing and future proposals on this question. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this issue for the limitation of nuclear weapons. The cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests would put a stop to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the creation of new and even more destructive types of such weapons causing an even greater destabilization of the international situation as a whole. In spite of the limited mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group and the

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

considerable difficulties it has already encountered, the Soviet delegation nevertheless considers that the basis for negotiations on this question exists, and it will continue its efforts towards the furthering of the possibility of the attainment of agreement.

During the present session, a certain amount of work has been done on the elaborating of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. A number of delegations in their statements both at plenary meetings and in the Ad Hoc Working Group have noted the contribution of the Soviet delegation towards the speeding up of this work. A number of important proposals were made by other delegations also -- the United States of America, the German Democratic Republic, the United Kingdom and others. However, we are far from feeling euphoric about the results of the work done. The most difficult part of the negotiations lies ahead.

The question to which the Committee has given greater attention at this session is that of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We fully understand the alarm and anxiety expressed by a number of delegations in the Committee about the programmes recently adopted and already being carried out for the designing of weapons based on the latest scientific achievements and discoveries, including systems and means for the conduct of military operations in outer space and from it. We regret that in spite of the almost universal understanding by delegations in the Committee of the urgency of this question, the discussions on it did not culminate in the adoption of a decision to set up an ad hoc working group. The basis for such a decision existed and exists. A number of delegations, including delegations from socialist and non-aligned States and also from Western countries put forward proposals meriting attention. The Soviet delegation will continue at the summer part of our session to make efforts to secure progress on this issue, bearing in mind the ultimate goal -- outer space should remain a peaceful sphere. The draft treaty we put forward concerning the non-stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space was designed to contribute to this end. As Mr. Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, stressed, "We are convinced that it is necessary to go even further and agree on a general prohibition of the use of force both in outer space and from it, in relation to the earth".

We are glad that the question of the safe development of nuclear energy is being discussed in the Ad Hoc Working Group, and more particularly in its subgroup. The Soviet Union made a proposal on this subject at the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. No one doubts the need to resolve this issue, and that includes the members of the Committee on Disarmament. Of course the approach to the subject involves a whole series of difficulties of a technical and legal character. These difficulties are heightened, we believe, by the desire of some delegations to settle this general problem in association with the specific question of the prohibition of radiological weapons. Whatever the technical difficulties, however, they cannot prevent progress if there is a political understanding of the importance of these two tasks. And we believe that such a political understanding exists in the Committee.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Through no fault of ours, the Committee gave less attention than it should have done at this session to the questions of the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, the strengthening of security assurances for the non-nuclear-weapon States and certain other questions. The importance of these questions has not thereby been lessened, however. The non-nuclear-weapon States are entitled to the guaranteeing of their security and of the non-use of nuclear weapons against them. Our views on this question are well known. We hope for a continuation of constructive discussions on these matters at the summer part of the Committee's session.

In conclusion, allow me once more to repeat that, in keeping with its traditional attitude of optimism, my delegation does not regard the situation in the Committee as hopeless. Objective possibilities for progress exist, and we must use them to the utmost. The Soviet Union is prepared to do that. As Mr. Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, said in the interview with the magazine Der Spiegel to which I have already referred: "Not to start an arms race where it does not exist, to put a stop to it where it is now taking place: that is the essence of our position and it is what we are aiming at in the negotiations".

But the readiness of one side is not enough to guarantee progress in negotiations. It is difficult to ride a bicycle with only one pedal. We would like equal efforts to be made by the other side also. This is the important thing now for the success of the negotiations in the Committee.

I should also like to point out that our Committee is and will always be at the centre of the attention of millions and millions of people. This is clear in particular from the letters reaching the secretariat, whose authors constantly call on us to fulfil our duty to the world community. One of these letters was written by 134 women and mothers of the village of Flersbach which is near the mediaeval castle of Spessart in the Federal Republic of Germany. Thanks to the work of West German film producers, this castle has become known throughout the world for its ghosts and apparitions. What worries the women and mothers of Spessart, however, is not nightmares about ghosts from mediaeval legends but the very real threat to the safety of their children. They demand the creation of conditions so that people may once again believe in a future worth living.

The Committee on Disarmament ought to heed this demand by millions and millions of people.

Mr. Chairman, we have recently learned of the new appointment of Ambassador Gerhard Herder, the representative of the German Democratic Republic, as a result of which he will shortly be leaving Geneva. Consequently this is the last plenary meeting at which we shall have the pleasure of seeing him. Allow me to express the Soviet delegation's profound gratitude to Comrade Herder for his co-operation with us and for the noteworthy contribution he has made to the work of the Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Mr. Chairman, although this is the last plenary meeting our Committee is holding during the spring session, allow me to join the congratulations you have received on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of April. It certainly can be said that during this month quite a basis has been laid from which to proceed at the summer session. At the same time, I am sure, everyone will be aware how much still remains to be done to achieve genuine negotiations on the priority items we have before us. Permit me also to recall, Mr. Chairman, the dedicated, tireless and successful efforts of your predecessor, Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, in solving questions concerning the adoption of the agenda and the work programme of this Committee as well as the re-establishment of its working groups.

As a result of the efforts of the overwhelming majority of delegations it was possible to include in the agenda for the first time an item on the prevention of nuclear war. Such an item, of course, cannot be an end in itself; it can only be a beginning. It should lead to concrete action, as the group of socialist countries has outlined in its document CD/355 of 21 March 1983. Several proposals to prevent a nuclear catastrophe are on the table. They should be taken up with the urgency and in the format they deserve.

Manoeuvres to bring up questions having no or only marginal importance in solving the task of preventing a nuclear war should not distract our attention from this overriding goal. Indeed, it is a question of the survival of mankind.

At the International Scientific Conference on "Karl Marx and our time - the struggle for peace and social progress", held in Berlin, the capital of my country, from 11 to 16 April 1983, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, emphasized in this regard: "Today we are facing a situation in the world in which the danger of nuclear war casts a shadow over the life of peoples, the danger of an inferno which -- if it breaks out -- would mean the self-destruction of mankind. To prevent this, to safeguard stable peace, that is the most important task of our time. Only in this way further social progress, the solution of other social problems and, in the last analysis, the salvation of civilization will be possible."

From this he drew the conclusion: "Before this forum I would call it the dictate of the hour that all political and social forces which sincerely want peace work together regardless of different political programmes, ideological positions and religious beliefs ... in order to save the peoples from the catastrophe of nuclear war. This will not remove existing divergencies. The defence of peace, however, as the highest value of mankind, is the joint, unifying priority interest. Besides, the engagement for peace leaves a lot of room for mutually advantageous co-operation in various fields."

Proceeding from this assessment, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic will also in the future contribute to and intensify its efforts in this Committee to achieve measures to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war.

Today, in my last statement before the Committee on Disarmament, allow me, Mr. Chairman, to offer some further comments on the urgent necessity and the modalities and practical steps for tackling the problem of problems of our time. It is only fitting that we have taken up consideration of it during this year, which has been called by many delegations a crucial and critical year for disarmament. From recent international developments and the debate on this item in the Committee on Disarmament, in the view of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, the following conclusions can be drawn.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

Firstly, there is a broad and growing political basis from which to proceed to actual and effective measures for the prevention of nuclear war. In the Prague Political Declaration of 5 January 1983 (document CD/338) the Warsaw Treaty member States advanced an alternative to nuclear disaster and called for broad international co-operation in the name of preserving civilization and life on earth. They emphasized that "it is essential to act without delay, while there is still a possibility of curbing the arms race and moving towards disarmament. At the same time they assume that all States, if they are concerned for the fate of their peoples and of mankind as a whole, must necessarily be interested in avoiding war". In the New Delhi Political Declaration of 12 March 1983 (CD/354) the Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries emphasized that "the greatest peril facing the world today is the threat to the survival of mankind from a nuclear war ... Measures for the prevention of nuclear war and for nuclear disarmament must take into account the security interests of nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States alike and ensure that the survival of mankind is not endangered".

In this context it is equally useful to recall the relevant and frequently quoted paragraphs from the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the Concluding Document of the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament. In these all -- and I emphasize, all -- States Members of the United Nations undertook to spare no efforts to negotiate, and I repeat, negotiate measures for the prevention of a nuclear war to save mankind from annihilation. This call has, indeed, been taken up by an overwhelming majority of States members of the Committee on Disarmament at this session. It has led to one of the most concerned and profound debates in the Committee that I can remember. We therefore consider the inclusion of an item on the prevention of nuclear war on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament as an important political event, which must now be followed by action.

Secondly, there is a broad and growing coincidence in the approach of a vast majority of delegations to this question. The working papers submitted by a group of socialist countries (CD/355) and by the Group of 21 (CD/341) as well as relevant statements by delegations from these groups give proof of that. They emphasize that all nations have a vital interest in the urgent negotiation of appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war and call for multilateral negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament. The socialist countries emphasized that it would be necessary, in the first instance, to elaborate such practical measures as have already found broad international support and for the implementation of which the political will of the relevant States would be required above all. In addition, it is recognized that measures of a bilateral nature should be considered in negotiations between interested States. Equally, the escalation of strategic concepts and doctrines, such as those of "a first disabling nuclear strike", "limited nuclear war" or "protracted nuclear conflict" have been condemned almost universally, because they are considered as a threat to peace. Already, during our first consideration of this item, concrete proposals for practical measures to prevent nuclear war have been submitted. These are measures based on existing proposals and leaving room for future initiatives.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

Thirdly, there is a broad and growing popular demand for urgent action to prevent nuclear war. Increasingly it is recognized that the prevention of nuclear war, as the most important global problem of our time, transcends differences of social order, way of life or ideology. All over the world people are expressing their profound disquiet and anxiety. It is no exaggeration to say that in North and South, East and West, millions of people are calling for the removal of the threat of nuclear self-annihilation. They demand with full justification that every existing possibility, all the channels of negotiation, be used in order to achieve real progress in preventing nuclear war.

The background for this demand is very serious, because -- as has been pointed out here again and again -- the risk of a nuclear catastrophe is increasing rapidly. We believe that the reasons for this must be spelled out quite clearly.

The striving for a nuclear first-strike capability, a policy of increased military confrontation and a destabilization of the international situation must give rise to grave concerns. They go along with efforts to put into question the whole system of arms limitation and disarmament agreements, the expansion and strengthening of which should be our common aim.

Ever new arms programmes are initiated by one side, be it very precise ICBMs for a first strike and mobile ones for a second strike, or the announcement of plans for a space-based ABM system with the illusory intention of escaping retaliation. Communications systems are being refined to allow of the precise functioning of these systems in the event of their actual use. All this may sound somewhat hypothetical. But we have to take these measures at their face value. They are, in the last analysis, aimed at making a "protracted" nuclear war wageable and winnable, while pretending to deter it. In addition, practical preparations continue for the planned deployment of new American medium-range nuclear missiles in some Western European NATO countries. Again and again we have warned of the serious consequences which will follow from such a measure aimed at the preparation of a first strike against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty countries. Only through serious and honest negotiations based on the principle of equality and equal security can the vicious circle of material and intellectual war preparation be broken. This is the objective of the proposals submitted by the socialist countries, including my delegation. We are convinced that they show a realistic way to lessen confrontation and to reduce and eventually eliminate the danger of nuclear war once and for all.

For this reason, the socialist countries have developed their comprehensive approach to the solution of this vital task. It provides for material and immaterial steps, so to speak.

Firstly, it provides for basic international legal guarantees to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

A most important step in this respect would be the renunciation by all nuclear-weapon States of the first use of nuclear weapons, which would in practice amount to prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. In this connection we have supported the proposal for the conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons which was so eloquently explained by Ambassador Dubey of India in his statement on 21 April 1983. Furthermore, the Warsaw Treaty countries with their proposal, addressed to the member States of NATO, for a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force, both nuclear and conventional, have offered an additional guarantee against the outbreak of nuclear war, and indeed, for helping to prevent any war.

Secondly, our approach includes certain international co-operative measures of a multilateral or bilateral character. This field comprises measures of a more technical character, such as preventing an accidental use of nuclear weapons or avoiding the possibility of surprise attacks.

Thirdly, we propose immediate measures designed to stop the arms race and facilitate the way towards nuclear disarmament. They include a freeze by all nuclear-weapon States on their nuclear arsenals and a declaration by all nuclear-weapon States of a moratorium on all nuclear explosions, until a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests is concluded. It can be noted that the New Delhi Political Declaration, in fact, advocates similar measures, pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament.

The existing proposals, in the view of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic, now offer a sufficient basis for taking the next step and setting up a working group within the framework of which measures to prevent a nuclear war could be negotiated. My delegation has strong doubts that this purpose could be served by another series of mere discussions at informal meetings, whatever they may be called -- "clustered informal meetings" or "workshops". What we expect to see is a subsidiary organ of this Committee which would provide for streamlined and structured negotiations.

We cannot understand why such an endeavour should be called "premature", taking into account the circumstances I have outlined above. Neither can we understand why we ought at first to look for a "common approach" and then start negotiations. We think the common approach exists already -- to save mankind from a nuclear catastrophe. How this should be done, which measures should be taken up -- this would clearly be a task for the working group to be set up. To go the other way round would amount to prejudging the results of the negotiations; it would be an approach which is alien to international law. Furthermore, we should take into account the experience we have already had with this kind of proposal. I remember that during the spring session of 1981, at the proposal of the Western group, we had a rather extensive discussion on item 2 at special informal meetings.

It is still interesting to have a look at the summary records prepared by the secretariat at that time. But we are still waiting for the step which, as it was then conceived, should have followed after these meetings -- the establishment of an

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

ad hoc working group on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. So, the question might be asked: is it the intention of the similar proposal now made by the same group of States to prepare the same fate for a working group on the prevention of nuclear war?

A strange and disquieting tendency can be observed in the Committee recently. One side seems to be more interested in starting artificial debates and discussions. Thus, in fact, barriers are created which prevent the Committee on Disarmament from dealing in a business-like manner with the priority items on its agenda. This applies both to items 1 and 2. By the way, it is no secret that the mandate of the Working Group on item 1 prevents it from doing serious work on the cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests, not to speak about corresponding negotiations. Therefore, it is our hope that during the summer session the Group will be given a broader mandate.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to conclude my statement on a personal note. The time has come for me to bid farewell to you and, through you, to all the distinguished representatives around this table. It has been a great experience and a privilege for me to serve for eight years in this Committee and its predecessor. I am leaving also with a feeling of sadness, not only because of the good personal relations I have had the chance to enjoy with all of my colleagues, but above all because of the lack of progress in our work, in spite of the serious efforts of many delegations, among them that of the German Democratic Republic.

In saying farewell I must also express my great appreciation and gratitude to Ambassador Nipal and the diligent staff of the Centre for Disarmament. It is also a pleasant duty for me to express my sincere gratitude and thanks to all my distinguished colleagues and friends whose congratulations and good wishes will certainly encourage me in discharging my new responsibilities. May I, at the same time, express the conviction that my successor will continue to enjoy the same excellent relations with all our colleagues in this Committee and the members of the secretariat which I have been fortunate enough to enjoy.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Gerhard Herder, for his statement, for the kind words addressed to the Chair and for the tribute paid to Ambassador Ali Skalli, the Chairman for the month of March.

Since this has been, at least during his present tour of duty, the last time he will address the Committee, I should like to express to Ambassador Herder, not only as Chairman and on behalf of the Committee but also personally, how much we have appreciated his important contribution to the work of the Committee on Disarmament of which he is one of the most senior members. Ambassador Herder was the first representative of his country in this negotiating body and its predecessor and has been with it since early 1975. He has served his country in his present position with distinction proving to be an outstanding diplomat, whose skills have been recognized by all, and I am sure that all members will join me not only in wishing him a very successful mission in the important post to which he has been assigned, but also in extending to Ambassador Herder and his family our very sincere wishes for their future happiness.

Mr. ERDEMBILEG (Mongolia) (translated from Russian): Mr. Chairman, before beginning the statement of my delegation, I should like to join with you and previous speakers and on behalf of the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic to offer our very best wishes to the Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic, Comrade Gerhard Herder, who is coming to the end of his important mission in the Committee on Disarmament. We should like to express our sincere gratitude to him for his great and constructive contribution to the work of this multilateral negotiating body and from the bottom of our hearts we wish him all success in his new appointment.

At this concluding stage of the work of the spring session of the Committee on Disarmament, the Mongolian delegation would like to make some observations on its results.

In our view, the first part of the present session of the Committee on Disarmament has taken place in conditions in which the course of world events has assumed an even more difficult character. The situation as a whole is no better; international tension is increasing; the threat of war, especially nuclear war, is not diminishing.

In this situation, the socialist countries in the Committee have consistently pursued a policy leading towards the holding of negotiations and the achievement of concrete agreements aimed at curbing the arms race and bringing about real disarmament.

In doing so, they have followed the general line once more clearly and precisely set forth in the Political Declaration adopted at the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty which was held in January of this year. That Declaration contained new and important initiatives and proposals aimed at the preservation of peace, the cessation of the arms race and disarmament.

I should like particularly to point out that the consistent and basic policy and actions of the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community and their steadfast position on the key issues of the preservation of peace and security in Europe and in the world as a whole, and the achievement of real measures in the sphere of the limitation of the arms race and disarmament, were once more clearly reaffirmed in the replies recently given by Comrade Y.V. Andropov to the West German magazine, Der Spiegel.

The Mongolian delegation, like the delegations of the other countries of the socialist community, considers it essential to speed up the attainment of agreement on a number of specific questions in order to give fresh impetus to the negotiations taking place within the framework of the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, towards the following ends:

The drafting as soon as possible of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests;

The speeding up of the work on an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons;

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

Proceeding to the drafting of a convention on the prohibition of neutron weapons;

The initiation without delay of negotiations on the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space;

The speedy completion of agreement on an international convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons;

The speeding up of the solution of the problem of the strengthening of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The most urgent and pressing task of the present day is the prevention of nuclear war. We believe that this year, 1983, will undoubtedly be the most crucial and critical in this connection. Feelings of alarm and concern are provoked by the plans of the present United States administration, which has decided on a policy of acquiring a potential for the conduct of a so-called protracted nuclear war, which would include nuclear first-strike weapons, new anti-missile systems and other destabilizing means of warfare. The general situation will deteriorate still further if United States medium-range missiles are deployed in the countries of western Europe.

That is why the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic and the other delegations of socialist countries, together with the Group of 21, have urged and continue to urge the Committee on Disarmament to take all possible steps to reach agreement on practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war. We believe that the inclusion of an item on this question in the Committee's agenda ought to be complemented by the setting up of an ad hoc working group to start genuine negotiations towards the adoption of concrete measures aimed at the prevention of nuclear war.

It was on the basis of this position that the socialist countries submitted a working paper, document CD/355, which contains concrete and constructive proposals. In particular, we propose consideration of the following measures: the renunciation by all nuclear-weapon States of the first use of nuclear weapons; a freeze on nuclear weapons; the declaration by all nuclear-weapon States of a moratorium on all nuclear explosions, and the conclusion, between the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty and the States members of NATO, of a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. We are, of course, ready to consider and to support all other practicable proposals and initiatives aimed at bringing about real measures towards the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe. The Mongolian delegation considers that the Committee ought, at the very beginning of its summer session, immediately to take action so that it can begin negotiations on the question of the prevention of nuclear war.

In spite of the many appeals made to it at the two special sessions and also at regular sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, the Committee on Disarmament has been unable to begin negotiations on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament because of the negative attitude of certain delegations. Together with other socialist countries, the Mongolian People's Republic will continue to urge the establishment of an ad hoc working group on item 2 of the agenda in order, in accordance with paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, to elaborate a programme of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

We believe that the prohibition of nuclear neutron weapons, on the subject of which the socialist countries submitted a draft treaty as long ago as in 1978, would constitute a positive measure towards nuclear disarmament.

Twenty years ago, as you know, the Moscow Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapon tests in three environments was concluded. That Treaty states that the aim of the States parties to it is "to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time". However, in violation of the commitment they assumed under the Moscow Treaty, the United States and the United Kingdom declare that the time has not yet come for the implementation of that provision. This attitude on the part of those two delegations prevents the Committee from undertaking negotiations on the conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

Like many other delegations, the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic has repeatedly declared that the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban ought to be given a mandate permitting it to conduct negotiations. The Working Group ought not, we think, to occupy itself with fruitless discussions on questions of verification. In saying this it is not our intention to minimize the importance of considering and agreeing on questions of verification. As was shown by the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group in 1982, the overwhelming majority of States consider that the existing means are entirely adequate to ensure verification of compliance with the provisions of the future treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

Consequently, questions of verification can no longer be used as an excuse for blocking practical negotiations in the Committee. We are again wondering what is the ultimate objective of those who are deliberately using discussions on questions of verification as a cover for their unwillingness to reach agreement on the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

In general, it is regrettable to have to recognize that as a result of the position of certain delegations, the Committee has had to be content with merely general discussions and has not been able to proceed to genuine negotiations on such important items on its agenda as the prevention of nuclear war, the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

We believe that attempts to bring the failure in other negotiating bodies dealing with the limitation of the arms race and disarmament into the sphere of activity of the Committee is a patently unrealistic approach marked mainly by its dangerous shortsightedness.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the only question on which the Committee on Disarmament has done intensive work during its spring session is that of the prohibition of chemical weapons. The Ad Hoc Working Group held many meetings; questions were considered in contact groups, and consultations were held among technical experts. Under the chairmanship of the distinguished representative of the Polish People's Republic, Ambassador Sujka, a good and very promising basis was laid in the months of January and February for moving on to a new stage in the activity of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons, the stage of the drafting of the text of the future convention. It is only to be regretted that subsequently, for reasons you all know, the Group was unable to continue with its extremely useful work for a period of more than two months.

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

Nevertheless we note with great satisfaction the profound interest shown by many States, and especially the socialist States, in the speediest possible achievement of agreement in the sphere of the prohibition of chemical weapons. In the course of the session quite a number of constructive proposals were put forward, and these will undoubtedly serve as a stimulus to the search for mutually acceptable solutions. The Mongolian People's Republic, as you know, attaches great importance to the relationship between the future convention on the complete prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons and the Geneva Protocol of 1925. We would like, therefore, once more to say that the step taken by the Soviet Union to meet the position of a number of non-aligned and neutral countries regarding the inclusion in the convention of a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons creates favourable prospects for the solution of this very important question.

It cannot be denied that the many years of discussion of the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons are bearing fruit. We share the view of those who consider that a sound basis now exists for more substantial and, more important, more concrete work on the text of the future convention. We hope that under the chairmanship of the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador McPhail, it will be possible for the work of the Group to move, to a greater extent than has been the case in the past, precisely in this direction. It would, of course, be a mistake not to take account of the divergencies existing between the positions of different countries on a number of questions which will call for further careful consideration and thorough study. A judicious combination of these two approaches will, we believe, make it possible in the course of the summer part of the session to make substantial progress towards the prohibition of chemical weapons.

With regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the Mongolian delegation, like many other delegations, has repeatedly drawn attention to the urgency of this question, which is becoming all the greater in view of the dangerous trend towards the conversion of outer space into a theatre for such a race and particularly in the light of recent actions on the part of the Washington administration.

The socialist countries constantly endeavour to secure the adoption of effective measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. There are on the negotiating table in the Committee various documents which could provide a solid basis for a detailed consideration of and the conduct of negotiations on questions of substance.

As a result of the consistent demands of the group of socialist countries, and with the support of the Group of 21, the Committee on Disarmament could in principle at the present stage reach a consensus on the establishment of an ad hoc working group on item 7 of the agenda, if it were not for the opposition of those who maintain the thesis of the "vagueness" of the aims and tasks of such a working group.

The Mongolian delegation considers that appropriate consultations should be held in the Committee at the very beginning of the summer part of its session for the purpose of reaching agreement on a mandate for an ad hoc working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space so that the group can proceed forthwith to practical negotiations.

Those were the observations the Mongolian delegation wished to make on the questions that are before the Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): As we come to the end of what is called our "spring session", that is, the first part of the 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament, I should like to begin my brief statement by deploring the fact that we have had to waste nearly two-thirds of that period on something which the man in the street would find it hard to believe but which we all know to be true, namely, overcoming the opposition of a very small group of countries to the inclusion in the agenda of this, the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament of an item concerning the prevention of nuclear war. This is all the more incredible when we recall that the United Nations General Assembly, in a resolution adopted on 9 December 1982 by 130 votes in favour and none against, requested the Committee to undertake negotiations on this question "as a matter of the highest priority".

I think that this is a first point on which it will be easy to determine the responsibilities, although the records of the Committee on Disarmament themselves are sufficiently eloquent on this matter. My delegation has made its modest contribution in this connection with four statements the texts of which can easily be consulted in the records of the 197th, 198th, 202nd and 203rd plenary meetings of the Committee, held in February and March last.

For the rest, although the item has finally been placed on our agenda, in practice progress on the matter has been practically nil, since there is still opposition to the establishment of an ad hoc working group on this subject, as proposed by the Group of 21 in its working paper, document CD/341, of February last. Nor has it been possible to set up a working group, as has been urged since 1980 both by the Group of 21 and by the group of socialist countries, to initiate multilateral negotiations on one of the two highest priority items on the Committee's agenda, namely, the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

A similar situation prevails as regards an item which is now more than a quarter of a century old and which has occupied first place on our agenda ever since the Committee began its work in 1979: I am referring to the item, Nuclear test ban. In fact, two of the three nuclear-weapon States which act as depositaries for the well-known partial test-ban Treaty signed in 1963 and the non-proliferation Treaty opened for signature in 1968, persistently maintain a position which is in flagrant contradiction with the commitments they solemnly undertook in those two treaties.

This is all the more deplorable in that the maintenance of that attitude has again led to the failure of the Committee in its efforts to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly in the Final Document of 1978 and reiterated by the General Assembly at its second special session devoted to disarmament. In its Concluding Document on that session, the General Assembly, you will recall, after expressing its regret that it had been unable to adopt a comprehensive programme of disarmament, stated that it was encouraged "by the unanimous and categorical reaffirmation by all Member States of the validity of the Final Document" of its first special session devoted to disarmament, as well as "their solemn commitment to it and their pledge to respect the priorities in disarmament negotiations as agreed to in its Programme of Action". At the same time, the General Assembly requested the Committee "to submit a revised draft comprehensive programme of disarmament to the General Assembly at its

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

thirty-eighth session", stating clearly that that programme "shall encompass all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in a world in which international peace and security prevail, and in which a new international economic order is strengthened and consolidated".

It would be very useful if the words of the General Assembly which I have just quoted were taken well into account by those delegations which appear to be prepared to contribute only to the elaboration of a programme which in its basic aspects they would like to persuade us is "realistic" but which in reality is incompatible with the Final Document of 1978, the Concluding Document of 1982, the two treaties I referred to and innumerable resolutions of the United Nations, many of them adopted not merely by consensus but in fact with the affirmative vote of those two nuclear-weapon powers which today appear to have completely forgotten their undertakings.

My delegation is glad that as regards the efforts to achieve the elimination of chemical weapons as well as with respect to radiological weapons, on both of which items there are ad hoc working groups, and as regards the subject of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, where it seems that only one delegation still has reservations about the setting up of another ad hoc working group, the prospects are less discouraging than they unfortunately appear to be with regard to the items I reviewed earlier.

It should be remembered, however, that all those items are on the agenda within the category of those covered by the topic "Nuclear weapons in all aspects", which appears as item I of what is known as the Committee's "decatalogue" and which, in paragraph 45 of the Final Document, is accorded the highest priority -- with good reason, since nuclear weapons, as the Final Document itself states, pose a threat "to the very survival of mankind".

We therefore hope that in the interval before the summer part of our session, the governments of the States responsible for the present situation will, with the help of the advice and wise guidance of their representatives who have followed our deliberations here very closely and have taken part in them, come to realize the imperative need to make such changes in their positions as are necessary so that, without prejudice to their security, they may no longer be in contempt of the Final Document, which embodies the philosophy of the United Nations in the matter of disarmament.

Since this will be the last plenary meeting of our spring session, I should like, Mr. Chairman, to express our gratitude to you and our great appreciation of the very meritorious efforts you have made during your chairmanship of the Committee in the month of April. Our expressions of gratitude go also to your two immediate predecessors, the Chairman for the month of March, Ambassador Skalli, and February's Chairman, my neighbour, Ambassador Erdembileg. I should also like to offer our thanks to the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General and Secretary of the Committee, Ambassador Jaipal, the Deputy Secretary, Mr. Berasategui, and all their colleagues in the secretariat, both visible and invisible, who have carried out their respective tasks with the diligence and efficiency to which we are accustomed. Lastly, in bidding farewell to the distinguished representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Gerhard Herder, I should like to add that the best that we can wish

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

him in the important post he will occupy is that his work there should be as fruitful as the efforts which have marked his stay with the Committee on Disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of Mexico, Ambassador Garcia Robles for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the three chairmen of the spring session and to the secretariat.

It has been brought to the attention of the Chair that it will not be possible to conclude this meeting this morning and it fears that it will therefore be necessary to resume the meeting at 3 p.m. in view of the time schedules of various members.

The Chair would therefore propose that we interrupt the meeting now and ask the remaining speakers on the list to take the floor this afternoon, since it is likely that the first intervention to follow would take us beyond the well established time of 1 p.m. for the conclusion of our work for the morning. If that is agreeable to members, I will then interrupt the meeting until 3 p.m.

It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 12.45 p.m. and resumed at 3 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The 216th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament is resumed.

As announced at the end of the meeting this morning, the Committee will now listen to the remaining delegations inscribed to speak today.

Immediately after the plenary meeting, the Ad Hoc Working Group on a comprehensive Programme of Disarmament will meet in this conference room.

May I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador de la Gorce. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, this is the last day of our spring session: it is high time for the French delegation to offer you the customary congratulations; it is a little late to add our best wishes for the successful accomplishment of your task as Chairman of the Committee, but it is the right moment to express to you our very friendly and well-merited gratitude. You have guided our work with the authority, competence and courtesy we know to be yours. You have been able, after a very difficult period, to establish our working instruments, to lay down guidelines and to stimulate efforts. It was in very large measure thanks to your efforts that the small amount of time remaining to us was in the end used to the best advantage, given the circumstances. The French delegation would like to offer you its very warm thanks for that. It has been happy, too, to give its support to the representative of a country united with France by particularly close bonds of friendship and co-operation which, I would add, are very well reflected in our personal relations.

I should also like to repeat to our distinguished colleague from Morocco, Ambassador Skalli, how much we appreciated his efforts last month during his period of chairmanship. He succeeded with outstanding skill in conducting the discussions which enabled us finally to find a way out of a particularly difficult situation. I would like to offer him again the gratitude of the French delegation.

Lastly, I should like to offer my very friendly good wishes to my neighbour on the left, Ambassador Herder. Ambassador Herder is leaving us after a very long stay in Geneva during which he made a very important contribution to the work of the Committee; I am well placed to have observed that. I would not go so far as to say that he

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

directly inspired all my statements, but I have never failed to take account of his advice, and I am sure that the same goes for him as regards my advice. So, then, all our good wishes to our colleague.

I do not intend to review again the situation I have just referred to, namely, the difficulties which marked the beginning of our session. The experience was costly, and we are all determined not to repeat it. The French delegation is therefore very grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, for the suggestions you have made regarding a reconsideration of the problems of the organization and conduct of our work. The informal group you have established in accordance with your proposals, of which I have the honour to be a member, has just begun working. The French delegation is happy to note that the members of this group have agreed to consider as a matter of priority the conditions that will enable our Committee and its subsidiary bodies to make the best use of the time available by devoting it to questions of substance. The main objective, is, of course, to ensure the re-establishment of the working groups at the beginning of the session. In this connection the French delegation considers that the ideas expressed by our distinguished colleague from Yugoslavia, Ambassador Vidas, offer an excellent solution to the problem: the automatic adoption of the items already on the agenda at the beginning of each session; the same as regards the re-establishment of the working groups which had functioned at the preceding session. Thus the only things remaining to be discussed would be new proposals concerning the agenda and the establishment of new working groups.

In the view of the French delegation, the question of the chairmanships of the working groups should be settled on the basis of rotation, without any account being taken of the presumed importance of the various groups. The re-establishment of a working group ought, in our view, to imply the renewal of its mandate, for otherwise the need for a prior agreement on a new mandate could deprive the re-establishment of the group of any practical effect. Any proposals for a revision of the mandate would, of course, be discussed by the Committee while the group in question was continuing its work. In fact that is the practice already followed by the Committee.

These are some very preliminary views, and in presenting them the **French** delegation has no intention of prejudging the results of the consultations which will be held within the informal group you have set up. My delegation is ready to consider in the most positive spirit any suggestions likely to increase the effectiveness of the Committee while respecting the principles governing its functioning. It earnestly hopes that the Committee will be able to discuss and approve appropriate recommendations at its summer session.

While the vicissitudes we encountered at the beginning of this session delayed the re-starting of the working groups, we must nevertheless recognize that the weeks devoted principally to the discussion of procedural problems and the agenda were not altogether lost, even as regards certain questions of substance, and I would refer in particular to the question of chemical disarmament. During the first two months of the session, some very important contributions were made on this issue; we heard statements of great interest at plenary meetings of the Committee; even before the opening of the session, the Working Group had spent three weeks continuing its efforts under the chairmanship of Ambassador Sujka, and in fact it could be said that it was that subject -- **one** we consider extremely important -- **which** marked the opening of the session. The situation has now returned to normal, with the resumption of work in conditions we consider favourable. The responsibility for this, I should like to say, is due in large part to the new Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador McPhail. We particularly appreciate his determination to concentrate the work of the Group on trying to reach

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

agreement on the points of substance on which there are still divergences of views. Ambassador McPhail has again used the method of contact groups which proved so fruitful under the chairmanship of his predecessor, Ambassador Sujka, while reducing the number of those groups to three.

I should like to say a few words about the subjects so far dealt with by these groups: the declaration and destruction of stocks of chemical weapons; the procedure for on-site inspections by challenge, and the question of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons.

As regards the verification of the destruction of stocks, the position of the French delegation is well known; we believe that such verification should in the first instance guarantee that the nature and the quantity of the products destroyed in fact correspond to what has been declared; then, that there is no possibility for the diversion or substitution of products during the process of destruction, and lastly, that the destruction is carried out in a manner that is irreversible or very difficult to reverse and that the final products are unusable as chemical weapons.

We believe that in order to guarantee all these things, international verification should be carried out continuously throughout the period of the operations of destruction. In the present state of technology, this means that international inspectors must have access at all times to every part of the destruction facility. The development of automatic verification systems will perhaps one day make it possible to reduce these constraints, but it will still be necessary for any equipment installed to be reliable and guaranteed against any manipulation.

In the contact group concerned with the procedure for on-site inspections by challenge, the discussion has centred mainly on the way a State forming the subject of a request for an inspection by challenge should react to it. According to the consensus which appears to have emerged in the contact group, a State forming the subject of such a request could not refuse to accede to it arbitrarily and without explanations. We believe that it is necessary to go much further. Once the destruction of stocks and facilities is complete, confidence between the parties can be assured only by a guarantee that none of them will subsequently resume the manufacture of chemical weapons. This requires, on the one hand, that the industrial establishments manufacturing products capable of being diverted for use in chemical weapons -- for example, products containing the methyl-phosphorus bond -- should be subject to systematic international verification of a strictness dependent on the potential danger of the products in question. In that connection, verification by the drawing of lots appears to offer an appropriate method. On the other hand, it is essential that any suspicion of a possible violation of the convention should be investigated promptly after the addressing of a "challenge" to the State suspected, by means of an on-site inspection conducted by an international team. This kind of inspection is so important that acceptance of it ought to be the rule -- it would, moreover, be to the benefit of the innocent State and would embarrass any dishonest accuser -- and refusal ought to be the exception. What the contact group ought to consider, therefore, is not the conditions that should be met by a request for inspection by challenge, but in what very limited cases a State so challenged could refuse such an inspection, and what justification it would then be required to provide.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

The third contact group has been dealing with the question of the possible inclusion in the convention of a clause prohibiting use, and the question of verification of compliance with that clause. As we explained on 8 March last, we are not convinced of the need for such a provision. We consider that the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons is already ensured in as complete a manner as possible by the Geneva Protocol of 1925, both as regards the products to which that prohibition would apply -- "asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices" -- and as regards the circumstances in which use is prohibited. The expression "use in war" ought not to be interpreted as having a restrictive meaning: in 1925 the idea of armed conflicts other than formally declared wars had not made its appearance in international law, and it is clear from the terms of the Protocol itself that its authors had no intention whatever of restricting its application to formally declared wars.

However, if a consensus emerges in favour of a repetition of the prohibition of use in the future convention, it would be essential, and I think we are all agreed on this, to avoid anything which would prejudice the authority of the Geneva Protocol. As the French delegation has already stressed, the preamble to the convention ought to contain a paragraph reaffirming the validity of the Protocol. Such a text ought also to state that the Protocol forms part of international law and that the prohibitions it contains apply to all. The future convention ought also to stipulate that none of its provisions can be interpreted as derogating from the obligations flowing from the Protocol.

If more is felt to be needed, the States parties to the convention which are parties to the Geneva Protocol could recall the commitments they had assumed under the latter, and those States which were not parties to the Protocol could declare their acceptance of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons embodied in the Protocol. Such a solution, which is very near to that suggested by Mr. Ackerman, the co-ordinator of the contact group responsible for this question, would have the advantage of avoiding both duplication with the Geneva Protocol and the risk of instituting regimes for the prohibition of use that were different for States parties to the protocol and States not parties to the Protocol.

As to verification of compliance with the prohibition of use, as was proposed by the delegation of the Soviet Union and other delegations, this should form the subject of appropriate provisions in the part of the convention devoted to verification. These provisions should take account of the specific conditions -- state of war or armed conflict -- in which a violation of the prohibition of use might be committed. They ought to be based essentially on on-site inspection by challenge and to provide in particular for speedy and unhampered access by inspectors to the locations of alleged violations. The French Government attaches particular importance to this matter of the verification of violations of the Geneva Protocol and more generally to the rule of international law it embodies. It was for this reason that at the United Nations General Assembly session of last year the French delegation, along with others worked to secure the adoption of a procedure for that purpose. We have already replied here to the objections raised that the resolution adopted violates the law of treaties. We shall, if necessary, revert to this matter. But we should like to repeat that an action designed to ensure respect for a provision of international law cannot be presented as being contrary to international law. In adopting resolution 37/98 D of 13 December 1982, the General Assembly in no way exceeded its competence. It merely

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

provided for the adoption of provisional procedures designed to uphold the authority of the 1925 Protocol, an authority which would be weakened if such procedures could not be applied when there was an allegation of a violation of the Protocol. The well-known and indisputable rule of international law concerning the useful effect of treaties -- Potius valeat quam pereat (the treaty should prevail rather than perish) -- fully confirms this.

In the event of any lacuna in an international undertaking, it is implicitly within the competence of the body best equipped, both by its composition and by the range of its general functions, to act on behalf of the international community of States as a whole, to provide for the creation of a mechanism to ensure that that international instrument is in fact respected and that possible violations thereof shall be brought to the notice of international public opinion when such an instrument forms an integral part of general international law, and in the present instance the body of rules of international law applicable in the case of armed conflicts.

I should like, lastly, to refer to a question with respect to which the French delegation has already had to restate its position here in response to declarations made by the Soviet delegation, and that is the question of the counting in of the forces of third countries in the process of the bilateral United States-Soviet negotiations on intermediate-range missiles in Europe. In this connection, I refer in particular to the statement made on 24 March by our distinguished colleague from the Soviet Union, Ambassador Issraelyan. The French position on this question has repeatedly been stated on various occasions and in various places, including Moscow, by France's most authoritative representatives; it is well-known and, I would add, generally understood and approved of. I should like to recall the reasons why we consider that the inclusion of the forces of third countries in those negotiations, and in particular our forces, is unacceptable in principle and based on ill-founded arguments.

The Soviet demand is not merely unacceptable to the French Government; it runs directly counter to the essential principles of disarmament negotiations to which all the States represented here must subscribe. First, the principle of the non-inclusion of the forces of third countries in bilateral negotiations. This is obvious: you cannot talk about the weapons of others in negotiations at which the country concerned is not represented, and no independent State can allow its means of defence to be thus disposed of in negotiations between other countries. Secondly, the Soviet Union's claim to a kind of super-parity, which amounts in fact to superiority: the Soviet Union thus claims the right to possess as many weapons as all those it apparently considers its potential adversaries put together. In the name of "equal security", it considers that those countries should agree to allow it permanent superiority, that is to say, that they should accept for themselves an unequal status, for the Soviet Union wants to be allowed not only equality with the other Superpower but in addition the equivalent of all the other existing nuclear forces. That is a new version of the old idea of condominium. It claims a right we cannot allow, that of determining the composition and the relationship of forces between two coalitions while ignoring the independence of their members.

As a result of our objections, we are now told that it is a question of taking our forces into account not directly but indirectly. We are told that it is simply a matter of counting on the side of the United States the forces of its allies, the figures for the British and French forces being simply added to those of the American forces in Europe. We consider that this presentation of the matter is entirely without foundation.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

In the first place, the independence of our forces is total and will remain so, any decision as to their use resting solely with the President of the French Republic. In the second place, the French forces are not in a position to act as a link between the central American systems and the defence of Europe; they were not designed for that purpose. Not only have we never claimed that our forces could be considered as playing such a role, but in addition neither the United States nor our other partners in the Atlantic alliance consider them as such. Furthermore, it is the very independence of the French forces, in so far as that independence introduces a new, autonomous factor in the strategic situation, which gives them their own value as a deterrent. The Soviet Union itself in effect recognized this when it signed the agreement of 22 June 1973 with the United States on the prevention of nuclear war, for that agreement provides for consultation in the event of a nuclear conflict between "one of the parties and another nuclear-weapon power", which must therefore be presumed to be acting independently. In the third place, it cannot really be claimed that the refusal to include the forces of third countries in the bilateral negotiations amounts to depriving the USSR of the right itself to possess the possibility, in its turn, of "detering" the French and British forces. It was recently stated in Moscow that the important thing in the eyes of the Soviet Union was not so much the point of departure of a missile coming from the West as its point of impact. From the French point of view, in the event of an attack against France, it is not the model or type of Soviet missile that is important but the fact that it is capable of reaching France. Intercontinental missiles like the SS.18 and SS.11 can equally well be used below their maximum range. Similarly, missiles with a range less than that of the SS.20 can, depending on where they are stationed, equally well reach France. We reject as false the idea of a Euro-strategic balance dissociated from the **over-all balance**. The 132 strategic delivery vehicles France possesses -- 30 SLBMs on five submarines, 18 ground-to-ground missiles on the plateau d'Albion and 34 Mirage IV aircraft -- are not to be compared with "x" number of SS.20 missiles but with all the Soviet weapons capable of reaching France. A quick calculation shows that the 98 missiles and 34 aircraft, giving a total of 132 nuclear warheads, should be compared with the more than 10,000 Soviet nuclear warheads which can reach France. These figures speak for themselves, so much so that certain persons in the Soviet Union have made a comparison between what the French forces might amount to at the end of the century as the result of a modernization the facts about which have been published by the French authorities and have been debated in the French Parliament, and the 1983 situation of the Soviet forces, about which it would hardly be true to say that they have been the subject of an equivalent effort of information and transparency. These figures show, first of all, that France adheres strictly to the idea of sufficiency and that it has decided to modernize its nuclear forces only because of the imperative need, in view of the increase in the threat, to maintain the credibility of deterrence on the part of the weak with respect to the strong, and in the second place that the claim of the Soviet Union, which is not new but has never been accepted, that it has a right to this super-parity, that is to say, superiority to the United States through counting in the forces of third countries, is an obstacle to the reaching of an agreement on balanced and verifiable force reductions ensuring security at a lower level of forces, a goal which my country naturally pursues.

In conclusion, I should like to express my hopes for the success of the second part of our session, the summer part, and I think that in this connection we have established a very useful basis for the continuation of our work. I should also like to offer all my thanks to Ambassador Jaipal, Mr. Berasategui, the secretariat staff, the interpreters, the translators and all those who, whether visible or invisible, have given us assistance.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador de la Gorce, for his contribution, for the very kind words addressed to himself and for the well-merited compliments he paid to Ambassador Ali Skalli, the representative of Morocco, for his efforts that were so happily crowned with success.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Committee on Disarmament at its 208th meeting, I now have the pleasure of inviting Ambassador Sene, the distinguished representative of Senegal, to take the floor.

Mr. SENE (Senegal) (translated from French): After the masterly statement by Ambassador de la Gorce, who spoke about matters of substance with his usual skill, I, for my part, shall be fairly brief and shall confine myself simply to making a more general statement as the contribution of a small country which nevertheless attaches prime importance to disarmament problems.

Allow me first of all, Mr. Chairman, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of April 1983.

Your talents as a seasoned diplomat, together with your long experience, have been of great assistance to the Committee in the present crucial and delicate phase of its work.

Allow me also to tell your predecessor, my colleague and dear friend, Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, how proud my delegation is of the outstanding way in which he directed the work of the Committee last month.

I should also like to offer my warm congratulations to Ambassador Garcia Robles who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1982 together with Mrs. Alva Myrdal. Both have made a noteworthy contribution to the cause of disarmament.

I should like, lastly, to thank the members of the Committee for kindly authorizing my delegation to participate in the present session as an observer.

The atmosphere of crisis, tension and uncertainty in which the world is living in these years of the early 1980s has greatly increased the risk of nuclear war. Since 1945 we have become accustomed to living in a situation of armed peace, and accepting nuclear terror as part of our daily life, as if atomic weapons could be the lasting guarantees of security and stability in the world.

It has thus been possible for the arms race to accelerate and become intensified. New weapons of ever more terrifying power have been added to already over-stocked arsenals, absorbing vast financial resources at the expense of the requirements of economic development.

Furthermore, disarmament negotiations have been marking time as regards the crucial matters of the halting of the arms race, the reduction of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

The meagre progress achieved in the disarmament sphere has so far concerned only peripheral matters. The non-armament agreements which have been reached have not really served as a starting point for major qualitative progress. It is for this reason that today, given the deep structural crisis in which the world economy is floundering, the shortage of resources and the halting of the process of development in the southern half of the planet, it is impossible not to be appalled at the soaring figures of military budgets.

(Mr. Sene, Senegal)

And yet, for years now, innumerable bodies, scientists and eminent persons have constantly drawn attention to the basic irrationality of the arms race, which in our view flouts common sense, morality and logic.

But the major powers have barely listened to these appeals and exhortations. They have always been obsessed with the ideas of deterrence, counterforce and other notions leading to over-arming.

Certain developments today make the existence of nuclear weapons less and less tolerable. There is, first of all, the deterioration of relations between the Superpowers and the gradual return to policies of force and confrontation. This reversal of the process of the relaxation of tension has its repercussions on all international questions that are today the subject of negotiation in all spheres and in all regions of the world. It aggravates existing tensions, blocks peace efforts, accelerates the arms race and encourages armed aggression and intervention.

Such a situation dangerously increases the risk of nuclear war. In various parts of the world now, army staffs are speculating dangerously on the partial or limited use of nuclear weapons, and acting as if a nuclear conflict is admissible and acceptable. A step has been taken towards what was formerly considered unthinkable: nuclear war is no longer the possibility of last resort but has today become a working hypothesis calmly contemplated as something inevitable.

No one doubts that such developments disturb the entire world community to the utmost. The peoples of our planet have become aware that they must do everything possible to avert the nuclear threat. For what is at stake here is the very survival of mankind. Thus disarmament becomes more and more every day the business of all of us. To paraphrase a famous saying, it has become too serious a matter to be left solely in the hands of governments.

This is why all the peoples of the world have their gaze fixed on the work of the Committee on Disarmament, from which they expect much. In this connection it must be recognized that the Committee took an important step in response to those expectations when it decided to include in its agenda an item on the prevention of nuclear war.

My delegation never doubted that wisdom would prevail in spite of the enormous difficulties which beset the Committee's decision. The danger of nuclear war has become so obvious that it might seem paradoxical that any normal person should hesitate to give it all the attention it merits. Yet some delegations, basing their attitude on the peculiarities of their region, have acted as if they wanted to divest the consideration of the question of the prevention of nuclear war of any specific character and effectiveness. For, although no one doubts the potential links between a conventional war and nuclear war, it would be wrong to suppose that every conventional war would lead to a nuclear war. There is a qualitative difference here which we must recognize if we wish to maintain any effectiveness at all. In saying this I am echoing the views of the General Assembly which, at its second special session devoted to disarmament, expressed its grave concern at the risk of war, and in particular nuclear war, the prevention of which, it said, remains the most acute and urgent task of the present day.

The General Assembly has also declared in numerous resolutions that nuclear weapons constitute the most serious threat to mankind and its survival and that it is therefore essential to proceed to nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Sene, Senegal)

At its first special session devoted to disarmament, the General Assembly decided that the highest priority must be given to effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war.

The Committee on Disarmament is today fully justified in discussing the prevention of nuclear war. It is therefore desirable that it should adopt a pragmatic approach in this matter so that it can deal in a speedy and practical way with the urgent problems involved. A number of proposals have already been made, ranging from the non-first-use of nuclear weapons to non-aggression agreements.

We hope that the members of the Committee and more particularly the nuclear-weapon States, will adopt a constructive attitude, will show a readiness for dialogue and will take account of the fact that disarmament negotiations concern the security not only of the countries of the East and the West but of the whole planet.

The prevention of nuclear war has today become all the more urgent in that the racist regime of South Africa is in the process of acquiring nuclear weapons. This policy, which is accompanied by constant acts of aggression against neighbouring countries, constitutes a grave danger for all the countries of our continent. There can be no doubting that the minority Pretoria regime, which is a pastmaster in savage and barbarous repression, would not hesitate to use atomic bombs against other States. It is for this reason that my delegation considers that the measures designed to prevent nuclear war should include the prohibition of all co-operation with South Africa in the nuclear sphere.

To refer now to the functioning of the Committee, my delegation, which participates in its deliberations as a guest, feels obliged to say that great efforts need to be made to improve its methods of work. The Committee ought in its activities to take greater account of the urgency of the problems of substance with which it is required to deal. In particular, it ought to try not to waste too much time on procedural debates at the expense of questions of substance. As regards the working groups, their re-establishment ought to be automatic. In this connection, I should like to say that my delegation is in favour of a broadening of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban.

Furthermore, the rule of consensus ought to be applied in a more flexible manner so as to avoid the paralysis of the Committee.

With regard to the question of the enlargement of the Committee, my delegation maintains the position it held last year. We are in favour of an enlargement on an equitable geographical basis. The criterion of competence referred to by some must not lead to new discriminations. Since disarmament is a matter which interests all countries, it would be unjust for the choice of members to be based on economic resources or technological level. Such a proposal is aimed at perpetuating North-South differences and giving preferential treatment to the richer countries. The principal criterion which should be applied in this matter, as it is throughout the United Nations system, is the interest shown by the candidate country. Any other criterion, giving preferential treatment to the countries of the North on the basis of the resources they devote to disarmament activities because of their technological advancement, would penalize the countries of the South and deprive the disarmament undertaking of its universal character.

Senegal, which is one of the group of developing countries, has from very early on demonstrated its interest in the question of disarmament.

(Mr. Sene, Senegal)

The head of the Senegalese State took part in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. My country has likewise played a large part in the establishment, at the regional level, of an approach and an institution designed to prevent armed conflicts.

Senegal, for its part, under the aegis of President Abdou Diouf, head of State, recently expressed its great interest in and commitment to disarmament through the observation of disarmament week.

This event was marked by conferences, seminars and serious discussions on all aspects of the problem of disarmament.

For the occasion, all the media were placed at the disposal of members of the Senegalese Disarmament Committee to increase citizens' awareness of the overriding importance of the question.

Lastly, I should like to say that my country has some reservations about changing the name of the Committee on Disarmament to Conference on Disarmament, if that were to mean the maintenance of the status quo in its composition.

My delegation is among those which believe that the year 1983 is crucial for disarmament. More than ever, all nations, and particularly those possessing nuclear weapons, ought to show moderation and wisdom. Resort to force ought to be abandoned in favour of dialogue and negotiation.

Developing countries like my own, which are the victims of the confrontation between the great powers, should be able to develop without foreign interference or hegemonic influence and freely assume responsibility for their destiny and their development within the framework of a genuine international solidarity.

In that connection, efforts should be made by all States to ensure the enjoyment of human rights with respect to the legitimate aspiration of all peoples to development, one of the key factors in which is without any doubt disarmament.

Disarmament, it is true, is a gamble, but to echo the eminent British historian, Arnold Toynbee, it is truly the great challenge of the twentieth century, and I would add in conclusion that disarmament is the sine qua non for the survival of the human race in the centuries to come.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): The Chair thanks Ambassador Sene for his contribution and for his kind words addressed to the Chairman for the month of March as well as the Chairman for the month of April.

[Speaking in English]: Distinguished delegates, this concludes the list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Lidgard. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. LIDGARD (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, my delegation will revert to the matter in a more comprehensive way at a later meeting, but since it has been raised today I should like to make a short statement now for the record. My delegation supports the views expressed by the distinguished representative of France concerning the character and authority of the Protocol of Geneva of 1925 on the prohibition of the use of chemical and biological weapons. In particular I would like to recall that the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 2603 A (XXIV), of 16 December 1969, recognized that the Geneva Protocol embodies the generally recognized rules of international law prohibiting the use, in international armed conflicts, of all biological and chemical methods of warfare regardless of any technical developments. My delegation therefore considers that resolution 37/98 D, to which reference has been made, is entirely within the jurisdiction of the United Nations.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the representative of Sweden for his contribution. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If that is not the case, the Chair would like to announce that in order to expedite our work during the second part of the annual session, I have requested the secretariat to circulate today an informal paper containing a time-table of meetings to be held by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies during the week of 13-17 June. As usual, the time-table is indicative and subject to change, if need be. The chairmen of the various working groups have been consulted in the preparation of the time-table, and services will be provided accordingly. I should like to add that the Group of 21 will meet on Monday, 13 June, at 10.30 a.m. in this Conference Room. If there is no objection, I will consider that the Committee adopts the time-table for the week 13-17 June.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: This ends not only our list of speakers for today but also the last plenary meeting of the spring session of the Committee on Disarmament.

The Chair will not attempt to sum up the Committee's work over the past three months. It is less inclined to do so because it is widely recognized that we have only just started on what deserves the name of real work. In fact, one cannot but look back with mixed feelings on the three months lying behind us. We are all only too well aware of the fact that much precious time was lost in trying to resolve procedural problems. Thanks to the untiring efforts of its predecessors, the present chairmanship has had the good fortune of being able to preside over a month's work on the substance of the Committee's agenda, and it is meet to pay tribute to their dedication and skill, which enabled us to do so. Further efforts are being pursued to prevent the recurrence of the kind of unfortunate start we made this year. Let us not dwell too much, therefore, on the negative side of the balance but also look for hopeful signs.

During the spring session, a number of eminent personalities addressed the Committee on Disarmament, thereby underlining the importance their governments attach to the work that is being done in this unique multilateral forum. These tokens of interest constitute an encouragement to the vigorous pursuit of our work.

(The Chairman)

The Chair also believes that a sound basis has been laid for a fruitful summer session and looks forward with confidence to a period of serious substantive work under the able guidance of the distinguished representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Ijewere.

In conclusion, the Chair wishes to express its sincere thanks to the Secretary, Ambassador Jaipal, to the Deputy Secretary, Mr. Berasategui, to the secretariat, the interpreters, the technicians and all other staff members whose unfailing helpfulness and dedication to duty are essential to the success of our work.

The next plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 14 June 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.