

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 July 1986, at 10.30 a.m.

President:

U Tin Tun

(Burma)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 373rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with the time-table of meetings for this week, the Conference continues its consideration of item 4 on its agenda, entitled "Chemical Weapons". However, in accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

As agreed in the time-table of meetings to be held this week, the Conference will continue today, at an informal meeting, immediately after the plenary, its consideration of the substance of item 2 on the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Peru, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru, Ambassador Morelli Pando.

Mr. MORELLI PANDO (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, the delegation of Peru takes pleasure in extending to you its congratulations on your dedication and your wise and able fulfilment of your difficult duties, as the distinguished representative of Burma, a highly reputed member of the Group of 21. Let me express my personal satisfaction in returning to this forum as representative of my country and as such I offer to you, Sir, and to other distinguished representatives my constructive co-operation in a spirit of goodwill. I wish also to express my thanks for the words of welcome I have heard from other distinguished representatives and from yourself.

The delegation of Peru has constantly sought to draw attention to the critical situation the world is experiencing as a result of the arms race, for which the nuclear Powers, which also possess the largest military arsenals, are primarily responsible. As the President of Peru said in his statement to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 23 September 1985: "We do not represent the strategy of any Power, nor have we been infected by the self-centred view of security that characterizes the Great Powers. For them, their own security means the insecurity of others, but in this way, what we always end up with is the insecurity of all".

I should now like to refer to the item before us relating to the total prohibition of chemical weapons. Last year Peru adhered to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Means of Warfare. We also ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and toxin weapons and on their Destruction. By these two acts, my country has shown its rejection of those weapons of mass destruction and its willingness to contribute to the prompt conclusion of a treaty that will forever ban the development, production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons and ensure the destruction of existing stocks.

For more than five years now, this negotiating forum has been working at a high-priority pace and yet despite the efforts made, today we have evidence

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

of the use in local wars of weapons of mass destruction. Similarly, it is disturbing for countries not engaged in the arms race, as is the case of Peru, to see the start of a new phase in the chemical-arms race with the advent of the production of so-called binary weapons, which are an even more sophisticated and frightful example of extermination.

There are those who, undoubtedly with the best intentions, advocate a "final and global solution" to the problem of the proliferation of chemical weapons. But this position, which is logical and worthy of consideration if confined to the short term, can also have the opposite effect if the quest for such a "final and global solution" becomes a convenient alternative aimed at legitimizing the present status quo that is characterized by a process of fait accompli in the development, production and possible deployment and use of chemical weapons. Similarly, when we talk about a short-term solution, it is very probable that all the States represented in this forum will agree that the negotiations should be concluded by 1987 at the latest. However, there are also those who speculate about the possible new deployment of chemical weapons from that moment on if that objective is not reached, thereby introducing a disturbing element which may serve as a bargaining "chip" but can also be the harbinger of foreseen failure.

There is no doubt that successful completion of our work in the short term implies firm political will, particularly from those who have the greatest responsibility because they are involved in the production of chemical weapons. As the Disarmament Conference is a forum for negotiating on disarmament in terms of its various priorities and not a forum to justify or explain the arms race, my country trusts that that political will be displayed as soon as possible.

In this connection, it is clear that the establishment of a mechanism designed to reduce mistrust or fear among States by means of transparency concerning inventories of existing chemical weapons in various countries would help the ongoing negotiations. In order to overcome the conceptual problem, the information could be confined to anything that unquestionably is considered a chemical weapon, although everyone knows that this as well as any other difficulty can be overcome given political will.

With regard to the various elements which are to become part of the future treaty, my delegation feels that it is worth making the following comments. First, the prohibition should be complete and without any distinction between States parties. Second, in the likely case that some States will remain outside that multilateral instrument, the prohibition should also include all forms of co-operation which may make it possible for a third party to manufacture such weapons of mass destruction. Third, the verification system should be designed to guarantee destruction of existing chemical weapons and also to avoid their development and production, in view of the risk of timely detection, whether covertly or using lawful means. Fourth, the treaty should establish an international body to carry out the verification measures as well as routine and challenge inspection activities. Fifth, there should also be established a mechanism for verification in cases where the use of these weapons of mass destruction is suspected.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

Despite the significant progress made so far by the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, we are all aware that we still have a long way to go. That is why my delegation fully shares the interest expressed by the distinguished representative of Japan for focusing our attention without any loss of time upon basic principles, leaving the details to be dealt with later by an essentially technical body.

Obviously, if the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons does not manage to conclude its work shortly, there will remain no alternative in my delegation's view but to promote the establishment of chemical-weapon-free zones in regions where suitable conditions exist. In this regard, Latin America has in the Treaty of Tlatelolco a valuable experience that can be of great utility in eradicating at the regional level the scourge of chemical weapons, whose common denominator with nuclear weapons is mass destruction.

Peru, as a contracting party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, not only views this regional approach to the prohibition of chemical weapons with interest, but for some months now, on the initiative of the President of Peru, has been undertaking at the South American regional level a major effort, initially at the bilateral level, to bring about understandings with a view to completing an agreement on limitation of spending on arms purchases.

Without prejudice to our active participation in negotiations on disarmament on the basis of the priorities established in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Government of Peru feels that the dramatic living conditions of the majority of the people in the country make it essential to redirect a substantial part of our defence expenditure to the vital tasks of economic and social development. This is a matter of ethics and also of consistency in a disarmament policy which, in the absence of tangible results at the world level, is seeking cautiously and pragmatically to tackle at the regional level the priorities established in that Final Document.

The delegation of Peru believes that this is a suitable moment to add a few thoughts about some other sensitive agenda items, in view of their importance and of the statements that have been made in this regard.

The Final Document of 1978 included all aspects of nuclear disarmament and assigned a shared priority to them. Among them, however, there is one which requires immediate attention, namely, the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests.

The unilateral moratorium, a temporary measure which has so far been extended by one of the Great Powers, is a promising sign, as is the announcement of the resumption of bilateral negotiations in this regard. But the treatment of the nuclear-test ban, understandably bilateral or trilateral at the outset, ultimately falls within the competence of this multilateral negotiating forum, as has been pointed out by the distinguished representative of Sweden. The item is one of legitimate concern to the international community, so that it falls to the Conference on Disarmament to contribute to the definition of a future régime of world co-operation in this area.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

In keeping with the foregoing, and given the lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament, there is the valuable proposal for the convening of a conference to amend the Moscow Treaty of 1963, under its article 2, so as to give comprehensive scope to the partial prohibition contained in that instrument, as suggested in resolution 40/80 B of the General Assembly, the draft of which was co-sponsored by Peru.

It is along these lines, and since vertical proliferation constitutes an incentive to the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, that we must bear in mind the appeal made at the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as regards the priority character of the cessation of nuclear weapons tests. This is a requirement provided for in the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which should be fulfilled promptly if we wish to ensure the continuity of, and promote broader accession to, that important multilateral instrument, which so far has been fully complied with only by the States Parties which do not possess nuclear weapons.

With regard to the item "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space", everything has been said in this forum about the possible implications of the spreading into outer space of the already grave rivalry existing between the Great Powers to achieve universal supremacy.

The comparatively lesser degree of development of the arms race in outer space offers on the one hand the possibility to avoid what is obviously avoidable, but at the same time it encourages a dangerous temptation to establish new defensive frontiers. Apparently, it would only seem to be a matter of undertaking preliminary activities for research and development purposes, but in fact what may occur is the well-known phenomenon of inertia in the dynamics of the arms race, which can per se generate the evolution of this initial research phase into the next phase of broader activities, and ultimately the deployment of new weapon systems.

In this forum we have heard new views, such as that establishing a certain analogy between the problems of the high seas and the problems of outer space. Nevertheless, aside from the relative value of any analogy, a comprehensive approach to the problems of outer space would be closer to that developed in the past by the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. In that regard, my delegation will on another occasion present its ideas on the possible value as an example of the concept of the "common heritage of mankind" enshrined in the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We share the view of the distinguished representative of China that the first step must be to promote the non-weaponization of space, and then take up the complex problem of its demilitarization. In purely pragmatic terms, Peru believes that it is necessary to supplement the 1967 Treaty on the exploration and use of outer space, and also that it is essential to reaffirm and improve the force and the scope of the Treaty on the limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. These are not definitive solutions, of course, but they can represent the necessary palliative measures while we are negotiating broader agreements.

(Mr. Morelli Pando, Peru)

As was said a few days ago in plenary by the distinguished representative of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, the new space age requires a global institutional structure to make space an area of model international co-operation. Accordingly, my country's delegation fully shares the approval expressed by the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka for the initiative of convening an international conference which could very well be UNISPACE III. One of its objectives would be the establishment of an international space agency which will make it possible to use for the benefit of all mankind the tremendous technology developed over the last 20 years. The conquest of space should not serve to underpin Faustian power policies but to save mankind from backwardness and poverty.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Rose.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): First of all, I would like to welcome wholeheartedly in our midst the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Martenson, and wish him a pleasant and successful stay here in Geneva. Permit me also to welcome among us our colleague the Ambassador of Peru, His Excellency Mr. Morelli Pando, who has just addressed the Conference. We wish him much success in his work and offer him the close co-operation of our delegation.

Before dealing with the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space I should like to refer briefly to the statement of the distinguished representative of the USSR, Ambassador Issraelyan, last Tuesday. His proposals concerning verification aspects of a test ban met with a very positive response from the members of the Conference. The Soviet Union again demonstrated its unswerving will to achieve the discontinuation of all nuclear testing. Let me remind you that it is now nearly one year that this country has been respecting a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear tests.

The USSR made it very clear that it will do everything necessary and possible for the reliable verification of a CTBT. The group of socialist countries explained its position regarding item 1 on the Conference's agenda in Working Paper CD/701. Everybody can conclude from this that the countries concerned are ready for constructive work to find generally acceptable solutions of all problems of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, including those of verification. It is now up to the other major nuclear Power to follow the example of the USSR and to demonstrate political will and flexibility in order to reach a breakthrough on this item. Let us redouble our efforts to achieve a comprehensive ban, which is called for all over the world as a first urgent step to cease the nuclear-arms race.

Resolution 40/87 of the United Nations General Assembly calls for negotiations with the aim of achieving an agreement, or agreements, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Although the mandate and the programme of work of the Ad Hoc Committee is far from responding to this decision of the General Assembly we should do all we can in order to ensure constructive work by that body.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

We should like to express to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Bayart, our appreciation for the excellent way in which he promoted an agreement on the programme of work and is guiding the work of the Committee.

The future activities of mankind in outer space are confronted with the following alternative: on the one hand, of peacefully using outer space for the benefit of all peoples, and respecting the right of each State to participate in that use; or, on the other hand, of including outer space in the arms race and subjecting activities in that area to a large extent to military purposes, and thereby threatening the future of all peoples.

Here at the Conference on Disarmament we have to deal above all with the prevention of the second variant. I shall not embark on a lengthy discussion about the feasibility of an SDI shield capable of providing shelter from a massive offensive nuclear strike. Doubts are growing everywhere about whether such an objective has ever been seriously contemplated by the initiators of that Programme. Has it not rather been the objective from the very beginning to create space weapons intended to be a component of an offensive nuclear strategy?

A surprise attack assisted by outer space means would require the following scenario. A propitious orbital constellation of a few communication and reconnaissance satellites is sufficient for executing all decisive tasks during a surprise attack. Some ASAT weapons appropriately stationed in outer space or even on Earth simultaneously eliminate all important space-based communication, early-warning and command means of the adversary. Due to their highly improved degree of accuracy, intercontinental ballistic devices destroy a great percentage of the adversary's ICBMs on the ground. The SDI system reliably wards off all the strategic forces remaining to the adversary for response.

Allow me to call your attention just to one of the possible aspects in this connection. Let us assume that the SDI system were based on nuclear-powered X-ray lasers which, indeed, range among the possible weapons systems. A comprehensive shield system would need about 100 space stations equipped with X-ray lasers, waiting for a massive ICBM attack of the adversary. Such a system is extremely expensive, complicated and vulnerable. But if the calculation includes the option to carry out a surprise attack on the adversary, thus permitting a 90 per cent destruction of ICBMs on the ground, about three X-ray lasers -- in the given moment positioned over the territory of the adversary at an altitude just above the air space -- would suffice in that case to eliminate the remaining ICBMs of the adversary provided, of course, no countermeasures would be taken.

One fact is absolutely definite: such a weapons system would constitute a hard blow for international stability. It would amount, inter alia, to the destruction of cornerstones of the present system of treaties on disarmament and arms limitation and prevent successful negotiations on complementary agreements in the most important fields.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

At the conclusion of his latest visit to Moscow, President Mitterand was absolutely right when he explicitly pointed out that SDI was an obstacle to the promotion of the disarmament process.

For all these reasons we object any attempt to add, through a so-called European Defence Initiative (EDI) still another medium-range and tactical variant to the strategic first-strike option, thereby carrying further first-strike nuclear versions to Europe.

The most reasonable and responsible decision would be to abandon the SDI programme and to refrain from the development, testing and deployment of ABM and other space strike weapons according to the ABM Treaty and other international legal instruments. Logically, this includes to forego the demonstration of a respective weapons capability.

In all disarmament negotiations and deliberations the issue of verification is emphasized, by some representatives -- sometimes so intensely that the real subject is pushed into the background. Let us briefly consider the issue of space weapons also from the angle of verification.

One can concede that verification of the prohibition of research is difficult to implement. But it begins to be feasible, at the latest, with testing weapon capability. Therefore the cycle of development should be stopped, at the latest, at that stage. An agreement should prohibit the testing phase because after the transition into production compliance with an agreement on prohibition would hardly be verifiable any more.

Let us take ASAT weapons, for instance. On 13 September 1985 the United States demonstrated a new ASAT system. Further tests are planned. The deployment of an ASAT system with two squadrons of F-15 fighters is intended to be effected in 1987. If it were possible to obtain a treaty on the prevention of ASAT weapons in the near future, before the planned further testing of the complete system, then the observance of that treaty could be easily verified. Even national technical means would be sufficient. The situation in this field can change very quickly however. The verification of a possible prohibition would pose much greater problems after the demonstration of weapons capability. F-15 fighters and ASAT weapons can be stationed at many airports and easily be camouflaged. At advanced levels verification would become more and more difficult. In this respect, the general awareness corroborated by practical experience is particularly true: the earlier the conclusion of an agreement, the easier and more effective the verification.

During the deliberations we have had so far in the Committee, several delegations have emphasized the importance of certain terms and asserted that the solution of substantial problems depended on them. I see no obstacle to a constructive discussion of definitions if they are necessary for the agreements to be worked out. The point is to orient our work more towards practical objectives. Therefore we advocate setting about elaborating without delay an agreement or several agreements on the prevention of the arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The USSR has proposed as a first step to begin with the prohibition of ASAT weapons and the immunity of space objects. This seems to us a very realistic approach. A preparedness by the United States also to observe a moratorium on ASAT weapons, as the USSR has unilaterally undertaken it since 1983, would considerably favour negotiations on that issue. Such a step would be all the more urgent as ASAT experiments already cause at the present time a number of interferences in peaceful activities in outer space.

The objective is clear but ideas are required on the ways and means to achieve it. Like other delegations, we concern ourselves with the question of what a treaty on the prohibition of ASAT weapons and the immunity of satellites would look like. Taking into consideration previous discussions at the Committee, a future treaty could contain in our view the following principal elements: firstly, outer space should be free of any weapon intended for use against space objects; second, any weapons system on Earth intended to be used against space objects has to be prohibited; third, a prohibition of the use of space objects as means to destroy, damage and disturb the normal functioning, or change the flight trajectory of space objects of other States; fourth, a prohibition of the threat or use of force against space objects; fifth, any harmful effects on outer space should be prevented in order to preserve its attributes for further exploration and peaceful utilization; sixth, unintentional interference with the functioning of space objects should be minimized; seventh, the free access of any State to outer space in accordance with the principles of international law should be guaranteed.

During the process of deliberation and negotiation, terms such as "space objects", "outer space" etc. would have to be defined for the purpose of that treaty. A system of verification measures would have to be agreed upon, too.

My delegation is convinced that an understanding on these fundamental elements of a treaty would promote a goal-oriented continuation of work. During that process it will also be possible to speedily clarify which aspects should be dealt with by other United Nations bodies.

The Committee's work has gained in substance this year. The deliberations have more and more focused on factual issues and the main building blocks, thus tending to shape the outlines of possible agreements. This tendency should be reinforced.

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): Burma has a tradition of contributing to peace and the harmonious co-existence of peoples in a quiet, even-handed manner which has evoked universal respect. My delegation is pleased to see you, Mr. President, preside over our Conference in this noble tradition. My delegation notes with particular pleasure the presence at our proceedings of the distinguished Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations for disarmament affairs, Mr. Martenson.

I wish to address today agenda item 3, the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

The purpose of my presentation is to recall the essence of my delegation's approach to the subject of the prevention of nuclear war and to examine a number of important developments that have taken place since last year's annual session and impinge strongly on the subject.

The priority position on our agenda which the "prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters" holds, has been demonstrated, as a recurrent theme, by a number of statements and activities by my delegation over the last three years. There is hardly an agenda item which my delegation has more frequently addressed in statements or working papers, both in the General Assembly and here. Foreign Minister Genscher, addressing the Conference on 2 April 1985, stressed the significance which the Federal Government attaches to a substantive consideration of the topic in this Conference. May I also recall, for the benefit of colleagues, Working Papers CD/357, CD/411 and CD/578 as manifestations of our position. From the point of view of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, the thoughts communicated to the Conference in these Working Papers fully retain their validity.

While the aforementioned Working Papers and statements were devoted to the substance of the subject, CD/578, one of the papers also addressed the organizational questions that are as of now regrettably still unresolved. The guiding thought of the Working Paper was that the supreme importance of the subject would make it necessary that all efforts should be directed towards overcoming procedural hurdles as rapidly as possible, and that all delegations put the substance of their concerns over concerns of procedure. The chosen work format, acceptable to all, should allow for a rational debate, an argumentative process, and not only for a series of prepared monologues. From that basic premise, stressing the flexibility which the rules of procedure would provide for a tailor-made solution, the Working Paper went on to spell out the detailed criteria which an organizational format for agenda item 3 should meet. It is the view of my delegation that it would still be useful to apply these criteria at the present juncture, notwithstanding the late hour in which this annual session finds itself.

As regards substance, the essence of my delegation's approach to agenda item 3 has always been that our examination of the subject should be based on a sober analysis of the ingredients of our current security dilemma. That means that the question of prevention of nuclear war cannot be dealt with in isolation from the underlying basic security situation and that the question at issue is the prevention of war in the nuclear age in all its dimensions. My delegation has insistently pointed out that this comprehensive approach to the prevention of war is in no way designed to belittle the catastrophic consequences and total inadmissibility of a nuclear war, that it is arrived at on the basis of an inquiry into scenarios of possible conflict and a thorough analysis of the real contemporary threat, globally and in the various regions.

The comprehensiveness of the approach, with all due emphasis on the specific nuclear phenomena, has also given rise to our frequently reiterated view that the prevention of nuclear war cannot be effectively achieved by individual, isolated measures of States, but only by a complex and

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many-faceted political strategy that relates to overall State behaviour. My delegation has often undertaken to demonstrate that, certainly, individual measures may enhance the level of confidence or may be indicated at a certain point, but the overall task of the prevention of war is a multidimensional one. What is needed is an influence on State behaviour in its totality which must be directed towards more peaceful ways. The gist of a diplomatic strategy for the prevention of war is to induce States to adopt a new code of non-aggressive behaviour, telling them how to deal with one another in the nuclear age. A State must demonstrate its peaceful intentions in a consistent, calculable and non-contradictory way in all security-related areas. Co-operative behaviour across the field of State activities is the essence of the prevention of war, including nuclear war. Thus understood, a comprehensive set of policies for the prevention of armed conflict has a unique potential for enhancing stability. Only in the framework of such well-regulated State behaviour may individual measures for the prevention of war bring their full effect.

In the various Working Papers tabled before this Conference to which I have alluded, our philosophy of the prevention of nuclear war has been arranged under four key concepts: the renunciation of force and the rigorous observation of the tenets of the United Nations Charter, restraint in the action of States, both in the degree of their armament and in the active prevention of the development of situations which could cause dangerous exacerbation of State relations, as well as the avoidance of military confrontations and the outbreak of war, balance of weapons at the lowest possible level, by means of negotiated disarmament, and the building of confidence.

The various actions, including appropriate and practical measures, which ought to apply under this strategy, have been set out in detail in the various Working Papers cited above, but they are also the subject matter of two draft resolutions introduced by my delegation at the thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions of the General Assembly. Both these draft resolutions bore a double title: "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, and prevention of war in the nuclear age". This very title was designed to reflect the draft resolutions' comprehensive nature and, in the view of my delegation, and of the substantial number of other Western delegations co-sponsoring them, this formulation does provide an excellent description of the overriding task at hand.

I need not go into the detailed recommendations of the draft resolutions, since delegations are certainly familiar with them, and with the comprehensive and constructive discussion which they have generated at the two latest sessions of the General Assembly. I would also like to note, again, that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his excellent report on the prevention of nuclear war (CD/603) has fully analysed and reflected the thrust of the first of these two draft resolutions, the second being similar in most aspects. Speaking of this action of my delegation at the General Assembly, I am particularly saddened that this session of the Conference on Disarmament has not yet provided us with an opportunity to review the purpose of the aforementioned draft texts. I would nevertheless like, as I did last year, to

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introduce the end result of our activities at the General Assembly, draft resolution A/C.1/40/L.74, before this Conference, asking that my reference -- as the other elements of this presentation -- be fully reflected in our annual report.

If a note of regret has shown through my preceding remarks, there is also reason for a measure of satisfaction when one refers to recent events that impinge on the examination of the subject. In the first place, it appears fitting to recall in this context the Joint Statement at the Geneva Summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev. In that document the two world leaders have solemnly emphasized the importance of preventing any war between them, whether nuclear or conventional. This joint statement reflects, to a gratifying extent, the comprehensive nature of the task at hand under agenda item 3, and it is hoped that in our future examination of the subject this comprehensive approach will be fully honoured by socialist countries in their contributions. In the same Summit communiqué another important element of the prevention of nuclear war, and war in general, is stressed: the two sides agreed to study the question of centres to reduce the risk of nuclear war and weighed the idea of the establishment of risk reduction centres on a bilateral level. It has been reported that first steps towards the establishment of such centres have since been undertaken by the two partners.

Two Working Papers on agenda item 3 have been submitted to this Conference during the current year, one by Argentina and one by China. In the view of my delegation, both are excellent and constructive contributions that would have needed much more comment and debate. I would like to seize this opportunity to express the appreciation of my delegation to the two authors, and to comment briefly on their proposals.

Working Paper CD/691 of the Chinese delegation, submitted on 14 April 1986, has the great merit of embedding the problem of effective prevention of nuclear war in the overall security environment. Rightly, the Paper points out that in order to achieve the prevention of nuclear war it is imperative for the international community to oppose policies of aggression and expansion, to respect and observe the Charter of the United Nations and other norms of international relations, to renounce the use or threat of force, and to make frequent use of procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes. These are essential basic strategies for the prevention of war and it is no coincidence that a similar list of recommended actions is also found in the Working Papers submitted by my own delegation. The Chinese Working Paper goes on with a number of concisely worded tenets and strategies which are all worthy of extended debate, although they may not all be acceptable to all delegations. One of the highlights of the Paper is reached in paragraph 7, which reads: "Along with the prevention of nuclear war, conventional wars should also be prevented". This vital insight is based on a correct description of the threats that might flow from the escalation of conventional conflicts into a nuclear war. The Chinese Paper also calls for the drastic reduction of conventional armed forces and armaments in the

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East-West relationship, anticipating thereby the highly relevant proposals which NATO and the Warsaw Pact have since circulated or are in the process of elaborating.

Working Paper CD/688 submitted by Argentina is equally noteworthy and encounters a number of concerns and purposes of my own delegation. On the basis of its well-known views of the nuclear dilemma, as specifically expressed in the New Delhi Declaration of January 1985, the Argentine delegation recognizes the need for measures -- even though they may be interim measures -- aimed at reducing the risk of a nuclear war. Many of the detailed measures that are here recommended merit a detailed review in our Conference with a view to arriving at common positions. In good part, these may not be too difficult to achieve. May I indicate certain elements of these comprehensive views which have particularly struck my delegation.

In its discussion of a nuclear-weapon-test moratorium -- although the difficulties with this idea are well known -- it is noteworthy that the Argentinian Paper insists on effective verification arrangements, even in a moratorium context. The emphasis on the importance of the ratification and strict observance of arms-limitation agreements, and the fullest use of the consultation procedures provided for in such agreements, meet with my delegation's complete approval. In another passage of the Paper an interesting distinction is made between the deployment of nuclear weapons in areas which are already part of the nuclear power equation, and those areas which have so far remained free of the confrontation between military alliances. The main emphasis of the Paper is placed on a large array of confidence-building measures, where recourse to the peaceful settlement of dispute, the extension of the existing agreements and mechanisms of rapid communication between nuclear-weapon States in time of emergency and other negotiable measures for the reduction of the risk of an outbreak of nuclear war are cited. It is particularly noteworthy that the Working Paper of Argentina explores, in an initial fashion, the possibilities for broadening existing risk reduction agreements between nuclear Powers to multilateral agreements, for which this Conference might indeed provide a proper framework. Equally, in praising language contained in the Joint Statement of the two Geneva summit partners for the establishment of risk reduction centres, the Working Paper by Argentina explores the possibilities of crisis control centres to be established in and by non-nuclear countries, thereby acknowledging that the current threat, especially to third world countries, is not merely of a nuclear quality, and that crisis prevention and crisis management in the third world should be one major focus of our attention.

My brief -- and necessarily selective -- reading of these two important contributions by colleagues, jointly with the evolution of thought on the prevention of war which is testified to by the Geneva Summit Communiqué, should lead us to one important conclusion: a thorough examination of agenda item 3 is most apposite, and it is also promising. In spite of the extremely divergent views on matters of security, especially regarding the nuclear field, which we observe in the Conference, the topic of war prevention may prove to have a catalytic quality for joint action which this Conference is much in need of. Peace and the prevention of war, of war in the nuclear

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age, are shared objectives. We have too long underestimated our joint commitment to this cause. A juxtaposition of all extant proposals, different as they may appear on the surface, and the construction of an indicative list of topics to be discussed, and to be examined with a view to identifying appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of war, could demonstrate a large margin of manoeuvre. May I recall that such a comprehensive and indicative list of topics is contained in Working Paper CD/578, and may I also recall our common understanding that, whenever we discuss agenda item 3, all views, proposals and initiatives should be considered without assigning any priorities among them. This agenda item calls for comprehensive treatment under the auspices of tolerance and increasing mutual comprehension of our respective security needs. There is no reason why an intensive and structured consideration of agenda item 3, in a suitable format, could not be initiated forthwith.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President and to my country.

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

The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a time-table of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the coming week. It has been prepared in consultation with the Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committees. As usual, the time-table is merely indicative and subject to change, if necessary. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the time-table.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As I announced at the opening of the plenary meeting, I intend to convene, immediately after we adjourn, an informal meeting of the Conference to continue the discussion of the substance of item 2 on the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 29 July, at 10.30 a.m. The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.