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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 30 June 1987, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. S. Alfarargi

(Egypt)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 417th meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. Distinguished delegates, at the outset I should like to extend a cordial welcome to the Director-General for Security and Disarmament Affairs in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Ambassador Kristvik, who will be our first speaker at this plenary meeting. I would also like to extend a cordial welcome to Ambassador Terrefe of Ethiopia, who will preside over the Conference during the coming month of July. His experience in what used to be known as the Committee of Disarmament, over which he presided, and his well-known diplomatic ability, will undoubtedly be of great benefit to the Conference on Disarmament during the month of July.

In conformity with its programme of work, our Conference will today begin its consideration of agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". 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. I have on my list of speakers this morning the representatives of Norway, the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The first speaker is Ambassador Kristvik of Norway. I give him the floor.

Mr. KRISTVIK (Norway): Mr. President, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you, the distinguished representative of Egypt, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We have appreciated the efficient manner in which you have guided the work of the Conference during the month of June. I would, in particular, like to congratulate you on the decision taken at the plenary meeting on 23 June that informal meetings should be held on the substance of item 2 of the Conference's agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

For several years, Norway has participated in the work of this important negotiating forum and all its subsidiary bodies. Norway has also been since 1984 the candidate of the Western Group for full membership, and hopes that this question will be solved in connection with the third special session devoted to disarmament. In two areas -- chemical weapons and a comprehensive nuclear test ban -- we have initiated research programmes which are relevant to the deliberations of the Conference. Today I have the honour to introduce three documents which concern the results of recent research in Norway.

My country is committed to doing its utmost to contribute to the multilateral negotiations on the chemical weapons convention, which would ban chemical weapons world-wide. In 1987, the negotiations are being ably guided by the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Rolf Ekéus. We highly appreciate his dynamic leadership and his continuous search for solutions to the sensitive political and complicated technical issues still outstanding.

One of the main problems concerns the question of on-site challenge inspection. It is the view of the Norwegian Government that it is absolutely necessary to dispatch the inspection team to the site concerned within 48 hours after the issue of a request for an on-site inspection. The investigation at the site should be detailed and comprehensive. We have taken note of the idea which was presented by the United States at the recent

(Mr. Kristvik, Norway)

Holmenkollen Symposium in Oslo, that when an inspection takes place, provisions should be made to protect sensitive types of installations and facilities. Norway believes that this notion of "managed conduct" is a way in which to address security concerns related to the challenge inspection issue.

In this context, I should like to point out that on-site challenge inspection would occur only in exceptional circumstances. Thus, it would represent the "safety net" to the convention, which would already contain an elaborate system of routine on-site inspections. In fact, an effective chemical weapons convention will necessitate more comprehensive monitoring systems than any existing disarmament treaty.

The solution to these questions will require the flexibility of all parties concerned. Against this background, Norway welcomes the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union are continuing their bilateral talks on all aspects of a chemical weapons ban, including the question of verification. These consultations, which were initiated after the meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in November 1985, have had a positive effect on the negotiating process in the Conference on Disarmament.

My country is of the opinion that both the multilateral negotiations and the bilateral talks should be intensified with a view to solving the main outstanding questions. The international community expects these abhorrent weapons to be eliminated as soon as possible.

Chemical weapons have recently been used in violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The incorporation in the global convention of a prohibition of the use of chemical weapons is therefore necessary. The Norwegian research programme on verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons should be seen against this background. As a result of six years' research at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, procedures have been developed for verification of alleged use. Today, I take pleasure in introducing documents CD/761 and CD/762.

The first document summarizes the results of research undertaken in 1986 and 1987, when the procedures were tested in two field exercises. These tests confirmed that the methods we have developed can be used on an all-year basis.

The procedures, which are outlined and described in document CD/762, cover the following phases of an investigation; establishment of the inspection team, survey of the alleged contaminated area, collection of samples, field analysis, preparation of samples for transport to laboratories, analysis in laboratories and preparation of the report of the inspection team. In elaborating this system we have consulted a number of countries, in particular Canada.

Document CD/762 provides that the international inspectors should conduct their mission in the least intrusive manner necessary to accomplish their task. On the basis of the field exercises, my country proposes that on-site inspection should take place within 48 hours after a request has been received by the Technical Secretariat. A proper investigation requires efficient methods for carrying out the inspection, with special emphasis on sampling and

(Mr. Kristvik, Norway)

sample analysis. Within 10 days after the completion of their on-site inspection, the international inspectors should present their findings in a report to the Technical Secretariat.

In presenting these proposed procedures, I should like to stress that the work undertaken at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment during 1986 and 1987 shows that some aspects of verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons need to be further examined. We shall continue our research programme with that in mind, and shall also take into account that some of these procedures could be applied to other situations concerning fact-finding.

Norway's development of procedures for on-site inspection on the basis of field experiments, which provide realistic and reliable data and avoid the artificial conditions of a laboratory, will contribute to the effective implementation of the convention. The wealth of research results will, no doubt, facilitate the work of the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat. In addition, the general aspects of the procedures should be incorporated in an annex to article IX of the Convention. Canada and Norway will therefore table a joint proposal for such an annex on 7 July.

A comprehensive nuclear-test ban would contribute to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation efforts. We are therefore of the opinion that a test ban, which should include a prohibition of both nuclear-weapon tests and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, should be concluded as soon as possible. This necessitates, however, that the Conference on Disarmament should resume its work on practical and interrelated issues, which in any case need to be addressed in detail prior to the conclusion of a test-ban treaty. Such issues include compliance, verification and the scope of a test ban. Two years ago, Norway and nine other Western countries outlined a suitable programme of work for these issues (document CD/621 of 24 July 1985). Against this background, my country regrets that the Conference on Disarmament has not yet agreed on a mandate for an Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban.

However, the United States and the Soviet Union are conducting bilateral talks on testing issues. Norway hopes that these two countries, prior to the seventh session of these talks next month, will agree on an agenda for initiation of bilateral negotiations on nuclear testing, based on a step-by-step approach. In this context, joint United States-Soviet experiments designed to improve verification measures would be of particular interest. Norway has also taken note of the inclusion of a system of mandatory on-site inspections in the "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests" which the Soviet Union introduced on 9 June (document CD/756).

In the field of seismological verification, the Group of Scientific Experts is preparing for the international experiment for the exchange and processing of seismic wave-form data (level II data). NORSAR, being one of the world's largest seismological observatories, will take an active part in this experiment. Its implementation will, no doubt, represent a further step towards the establishment of a future global system for the international exchange of seismic data.

(Mr. Kristvik, Norway)

Norway has consistently maintained that such a global system must take advantage of the rapid and ongoing technological developments in seismic instrumentation, data communication and computer systems. This is the general thesis of document CD/763, which also describes the recent operation and associated research activities at the large-aperture Norwegian Seismic Array (NORSAR) and the small-aperture Norwegian Regional Seismic Array System (NORESS).

Drawing on the experience gained in the operation of these two arrays, document CD/763 contains three concrete proposals concerning principles for a modern seismic data exchange system. Firstly, the global seismic network should, to the extent it is practically possible and otherwise appropriate, incorporate the establishment of small-aperture seismic arrays along NORESS principles. Secondly, seismic data exchange by dedicated, high-capacity links, such as satellite channels using small dedicated ground stations, would form a convenient, efficient and reliable method for the needs of the envisaged global data exchange system. Thirdly, it must be possible, through an international data centre in the global seismic network, to request and obtain any level II data from any participating station.

The preparation of these three documents is a reflection of the considerable resources which Norway devotes to its participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. It is also an indication of the significance which the Norwegian Government attaches to the Conference on Disarmament, as the single negotiating forum for global disarmament questions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Ambassador Kristvik of Norway for his statement, and for the very kind words that he directed to me. I now give the floor to Ambassador Friedersdorf, the representative of the United States of America to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): Mr. President, as the new United States representative to the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to thank you for the very warm, courteous and hospitable manner in which you and your colleagues have welcomed me. The representatives, delegates and members of the secretariat whom I have met have all made me feel very much at home. I am grateful for the assistance and friendship all of you have extended to me, and I look forward to working with all of you.

I am most impressed, Mr. President, with your dedication and attention to the work of the Conference, with the diligence and energy you bring to your important responsibilities, and with your impartial and fair approach. It is a pleasure to take up my duties during the presidency of the representative of a country and an ancient and wise people with whom the United States enjoys close and friendly relations.

My delegation also extends a warm welcome to the new representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Tarmidzi, and wishes him well as he takes up his new responsibilities in Geneva. My delegation also welcomes the representative of Norway, the Conference's old friend Ambassador Kristvik, who has returned to Geneva to address us again today. By the introduction today of additional working papers, Norway continues its important contributions to our work.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

It is very reassuring for a newcomer to this forum to witness, at first hand, the seriousness with which delegations apply themselves to the critical tasks of disarmament negotiations. The results may not be as far-reaching or timely as we would wish, but I believe the peoples of the world can rely on the dedication and skill of those individuals representing the countries at this Conference to do their utmost to achieve real and lasting results in the field of disarmament.

The approach of my Government to our work here has often been articulated. But it may be useful to set it out again at this time. United States arms control objectives are integrated with its defence and foreign policies to strengthen deterrence and stability; to reduce the risk of all war, especially nuclear war; and to support the security of the United States' allies. Since the beginning of his Administration, President Reagan has followed these fundamental principles: We seek only those agreements which contribute to our security and that of our allies; We seek agreements which reduce forces, not simply limit them; To this end, we seek agreements on broad, deep and equitable reductions in offensive arms; Within the category of offensive nuclear arms, we give priority to reducing the most destabilizing weapons, that is, fast-flying, non-recallable ballistic missiles; We also seek equitable arms control agreements in the areas of nuclear testing, chemical weapons and conventional forces; We insist on agreements that can be effectively verified. Arms control agreements without effective verification provisions are worse than no agreements at all. These principles form the basis for our efforts to bring renewed integrity to arms control.

Let me turn now to the first items on our agenda: a nuclear test ban, and cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. These two agenda items, and their interrelationship, are matters that the United States delegation has addressed in this Conference on many occasions, most recently in plenary statements by the acting United States representative on 24 February and 23 April of this year. However, more recent interventions, in particular the plenary statement by the distinguished Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, make it important to ensure that there is no misunderstanding on the part of others as to United States views.

I want to begin with the subject of deterrence, specifically nuclear deterrence. In his statement of 9 June, Minister Petrovsky delivered a litany of alleged ills and evils of nuclear deterrence, laying this heavy burden at the feet of the West. He ascribed to the West dogmatic tenets, wrongly picturing our view of nuclear weapons as "a blessing for mankind", and claimed that nuclear deterrence is "nothing other than a concentrated expression of militarist intentions".

I hardly need to say that the United States strongly rejects this mischaracterization of nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence is not a matter of a blind, inflexible doctrine. Nuclear deterrence is a policy designed to support Western security. The Western States, including those which make up the NATO alliance, rely on nuclear deterrence in 1987, as they have relied on nuclear deterrence for decades, not because of some obstinate devotion to an abstract concept. No, the United States and its allies live in a real and a

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

dangerous world -- one torn by violations of the United Nations Charter's fundamental prohibition against the use or threat of use of force. In this world it is clear to anyone who chooses to examine the facts that nuclear deterrence is a matter not of theory, but of security. Nuclear deterrence is designed to prevent the outbreak of war -- be it conventional or nuclear -- by ensuring that a State possessing massive forces armed with conventional and chemical weapons -- in addition to nuclear weapons -- has nothing to gain, and much to lose, by initiating an attack.

If nuclear deterrence is tantamount to being unwilling to remove the nuclear threat, then the Soviet Union may look to its own position more critically, in the light of its unwillingness to adopt a truly "zero-zero" approach in the bilateral negotiations on intermediate nuclear forces, and to agree to ban all such forces, including those outside Europe.

To pursue real progress on the issues of arms control -- bilaterally; between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization; and among members of the Conference on Disarmament -- the Soviet Union should take into account what the views of my Government and of United States allies really are, and not create false issues on the relevance of deterrence.

In its statement of 24 February in this Chamber dealing with nuclear deterrence, the United States delegation stressed the absence of general conflict in Europe since 1945; recalled the agreement of General Secretary Gorbachev with President Reagan that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought; addressed the role of nuclear deterrence in Soviet military thinking; and spoke of the final essentiality that the international community, over time, find other means to ensure international security. The United States, for its part, understands full well what a tragedy any use of nuclear weapons would be, as it understands what a tragedy the widespread use of conventional weapons, and now even chemical weapons, has been over the past 40 years, and continues to be even today.

At their 12 June meeting in Reykjavik, just 18 days ago, the foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization issued a statement that included an important reaffirmation of the policy of deterrence. I quote that document:

"Serious imbalances in the conventional, chemical and nuclear field, and the persisting build-up of Soviet military power, continue to preoccupy us. We reaffirm that there is no alternative, as far as we can foresee, to the Alliance concept for the prevention of war -- the strategy of deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces, each element being indispensable."

I would invite my colleagues around this table to consider what the situation would be in Europe today without the consistent implementation of this deterrent policy. And I would pose this further question: If the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union is not for the purpose of deterring attack, what is its purpose?

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

I have referred to the security situation in Europe. One important United States effort, designed, in part, to improve security thereby reducing the number of nuclear weapons, is the intermediate nuclear force negotiations that are continuing here in Geneva. On 16 June, the United States formally presented its position in those negotiations, calling for the global elimination of all shorter-range INF missile systems of the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States INF delegation also took that occasion to call attention to the benefits to the United States, the Soviet Union and the world at large were the Soviet Union to join the United States in agreeing now to the global elimination of all United States and Soviet longer-range INF systems. The global elimination of these systems would increase confidence in an agreement by greatly simplifying verification and making questions of compliance less ambiguous. The appearance of a single SS-20 missile would be an unambiguous violation of the agreement. Given the range, mobility and transportability of these systems, they are a threat wherever they are deployed.

Let me turn now specifically to the first item on our agenda, a nuclear-test ban. This Conference is well aware that representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union have been meeting in Geneva since July 1986 in a series of discussions known as the nuclear testing experts meetings. The most recent session ended on 29 May, and the next is scheduled for mid-July. Within the context of those meetings, the United States has proposed to the Soviet Union a process whereby the two countries initiate negotiations on the subject of nuclear testing. The Soviet Union has, thus far, rejected the United States proposals.

At the October 1986 Reykjavik meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, and in the recent discussions in Moscow between Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, both sides agreed that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is a long-term objective which must be approached via a step-by-step process. The first order of business in this step-by-step process will be the negotiation of verification improvements to the threshold testing treaties of 1974 and 1976, i.e., the threshold test-ban treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty.

Agreement on such improvements would lead to the ratification of those treaties by the United States. The United States has agreed that, in parallel with reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both countries, a subsequent step could be to proceed to negotiations on intermediate limitations on nuclear testing. For its part, the United States has consistently affirmed its position that the ultimate goal of ceasing nuclear testing can only be reached through a series of steps in conjunction with a parallel programme to reduce and ultimately eliminate nuclear weapons.

In apparent harmony with its understanding that this is a step-by-step process, the Soviet Union has proposed joint experiments on improved verification that would allow a demonstration of both direct hydrodynamic yield measurement techniques, advocated by the United States, and indirect seismic methods, favoured by the USSR.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

This, in the United States' understanding, would be related to the first step, i.e., the negotiation of verification improvements for the threshold test-ban treaty and the peaceful nuclear explosions treaty. The United States has regarded this proposal as a potentially useful initiative; it is being addressed by representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union.

At no time during the bilateral discussions has there been serious discussion of any kind of testing moratorium. Proposals to make a moratorium the first step in the process must be regarded as an appeal to emotions rather than good sense. Such an approach undermines the work already accomplished, and if pursued, would ensure that a first step is never taken. It is ironic that a first-step testing moratorium is inconsistent with the joint verification activities proposed at the highest levels of the Soviet Government.

The United States stands prepared to pursue the understandings which form the basis of the discussions now being conducted in the nuclear testing experts meetings. My Government reiterates its proposal that the United States and the Soviet Union immediately initiate bilateral negotiations on nuclear testing in accordance with the understandings which have been reached between the two sides at the highest levels.

The United States agrees with the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single forum of world-wide scope for multilateral disarmament negotiations, and acknowledges the interest of the States represented here in this important subject. Therefore, my Government has called upon this body to undertake actions which would complement, not compete with, the bilateral efforts I have described. And my Government insists that a multilateral negotiating body only conclude agreements which entail multilateral obligations. My delegation once again expresses willingness to support an ad hoc committee on a nuclear-test ban based on a non-negotiating mandate.

Let me turn briefly to one matter related to items 1 and 2, and, moreover, 3 of our agenda. That matter is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968. My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate the Parliament of the Spanish State on its ratification of this important measure of nuclear arms control. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is an agreement that has been a truly stabilizing force in the prevention of war, including nuclear war, and in bringing about a cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

I would like to conclude today by noting with satisfaction that our chemical weapons negotiations have resumed in earnest. My delegation looks forward to registering real advances, both on the basic issues that remain to be resolved, and on the many key details that need to be worked out. To facilitate understanding of chemical weapons verification issues and to assist our efforts here, the United States has invited the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Nazarkin, and appropriate Soviet experts to visit the United States chemical weapons destruction facility in Tooele, Utah. This would include a visit to a chemical weapons bunker. I want to say to Ambassador Nazarkin today that this invitation remains open, and that I hope he can accept it.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

General Secretary Gorbachev, in a statement made in Moscow on 23 June, noted that the Soviet Union is building a chemical weapons destruction facility. Secretary of State Shultz had suggested, earlier this year, that the two sides exchange visits to the sites of their destruction facilities. These visits would be practical examples of confidence-building in the field of chemical weapons arms control. They would add to other encouraging achievements in confidence-building. One of these is the recent United States-Soviet agreement on a draft joint text to establish nuclear risk reduction centres in their capitals. This agreement, which is a direct result of a United States initiative, is a practical measure that will strengthen international security by reducing the risk of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union that might result from accident, misunderstanding or miscalculation.

Another positive development in confidence-building, of course, was the adoption by the Stockholm Conference, in September 1986, of a set of confidence-building measures, based largely on proposals made by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, designed to increase the openness and predictability of military activities in Europe.

With these successes in mind, let us approach our own work in the Conference on Disarmament with optimism and confidence that we shall ourselves be successful.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Ambassador Friedersdorf, the representative of the United States of America to the Conference on Disarmament, for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair, including his reference to the close relations between Egypt and the United States of America. I would now like to welcome His Excellency, Dr. Larijani the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs for the Islamic Republic of Iran. I give him the floor.

Mr. LARIJANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, I would like at the outset to express my pleasure and gratitude for the opportunity which has been given to me to address this august forum. May I also express my sincere wishes for the success of the current session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The items on the agenda of the current session of the Conference on Disarmament are all of importance to the future of mankind and international peace and security. The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great significance to, and follows with keen interest, the deliberations in this Conference. However, due to time limitations, I cannot take up all the issues, but will confine myself to the important issue of chemical weapons, hoping that we can contribute in some way to this important issue. The issue of chemical weapons, the discussion about this topic, is a matter of urgency at this time.

Nuclear weapons were twice used in the course of the Second World War. Fortunately, they have not been used since. Chemical weapons, on the contrary, have been deployed continuously and used on an increasing basis over the past three and a half years. The main characteristics of chemical deployment over this period includes the ever-increasing sophistication of the chemical weapons and the chemical agents which have been used, making the cure of the injured people more difficult and the provision of help much more

(Mr. Larijani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

complicated. At the beginning of this tragic period chemical warfare was directed against military objectives and targets mainly, but recently the use of chemical weapons on civilian targets has been increased and intensified.

The pattern of progress among these characteristics should indeed be considered alarming to the human community. Should this horrible trend continue, the day will soon arrive when criminal elements may try to use chemical bombs and explosives against airports and cities of other countries. It seems very unreasonable to watch these developments passively and merely feel content with recommending to the civilian populace to carry gas masks in their handbags during their normal shopping and daily work. We think this is a historic moment in the Conference on Disarmament to be more realistic. There is a point of urgency to the matter.

Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General, in March 1984, the United Nations produced its first report on the use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war. In April 1985, a second report confirmed the use of chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers. A third report prepared in March 1986 concluded that chemical weapons had been used by Iraqi forces against Iranian positions. But the last report of 8 May 1987, prepared by the team of specialists dispatched by the Secretary-General to both Iran and Iraq, shows a new dimension as regards the violation of international law. In this report the use of chemical weapons against the civilian population is explicitly cited. The specialists report that they visited a whole family, including young children as well as old members of the family, injured by such weapons. The same team also reports on their visit to a two-year-old baby, a victim of mustard gas, who died in front of their very eyes. Needless to say, these are only the incidents known to the team. Numerous others have just slept in history; no cameras present, no team to depict the tragedy of their suffering for future generations, not to mention for the future deliberations of the politicians of the world. The state of ignorance on such an important manner seems to be beyond expectation.

Along the same current of events, just two days ago, on 28 June 1987, Iraqi forces attacked the city of Sardasht. Four residential areas in the city were the target of chemical bombardment. The first report shows more than 10 deaths and more than 650 injuries, mostly children who happen to be more vulnerable and defenceless once exposed to the green and yellowish clouds generated by mustard gas.

It is very essential that we should all for a moment imagine how a child would behave when he cries hard for survival, and with each cry, lumps of this lethal gas are pumped into his lungs. We should also imagine what the desperate mother could do — prevent the child from breathing, I mean suffocate him, or let her dear one die of mustard gas.

Mr. President, please don't recommend that all children should carry a gas mask in their back-pack; don't recommend that children should stop breathing for a few hours. No, Mr. President, we should do something serious, and right now.

(Mr. Larijani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

Nobody should expect a criminal government, a defeated aggressor which recognizes no boundaries to its action, to abide by any law or regulation. But are we justified in leaving the future of our lives to the whims and wishes of such criminals?

I hope I have been able to demonstrate the urgency of the matter, and why we should act right now, for tomorrow is too late. We should embark on some serious concrete and practical ways to deal with such insanity and criminal conduct. Firstly, we should try to strengthen the Geneva Protocol of 1925, for example through reaffirmation of commitment to the Protocol by the signatory States. Secondly, any and all international responses to any violation of the Protocol should be concrete, strong and prompt. Thirdly, all possible ways and means should be utilized to exert pressure on the violator in order to prevent the repetition of such crimes. This should include, among other things, the imposition of a total arms embargo and a variety of sanctions, as well as suspension of its membership in the United Nations and other international organizations. We are sure that in the present case, if these ideas are materialized and implemented, the aggressor régime of Iraq will definitely be prevented from continuing further use of chemical weapons.

It simply does not make sense that countries crying for humanity, peace and stability are generously arming, assisting and politically supporting such a criminal régime, regardless of its violation of international law and continuation of such shameless crimes. No political ambition can justify this ignorance! Any assistance to the violator with the knowledge of its continuous violations is in itself a crime and constitutes participation in the crime.

Finally, it is our earnest hope that this session of the Conference on Disarmament will produce the necessary machinery and needed modalities for strengthening the ban on the use of chemical weapons, effective implementation of international law and regulations in this field, and safeguarding peace, stability and the future of mankind. Considering the tangible and substantial progress made in the course of the past year in the preparation of the convention on chemical weapons, while hoping that it will be finalized at the earliest possible time, I would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation to Ambassador Ekéus, Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, and his colleagues in the working groups.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Dr. Larijani, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, for his statement. Distinguished representatives, we thus conclude the list of speakers for today's meeting — I give the floor to the representative of the USSR.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I should like to welcome the presence in our midst today of the Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Ambassador Kristvik, whose statement we have just heard with great attention and interest. It was also interesting to hear the first statement by the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Friedersdorf. In connection with his statement, I should like to make a number of comments. First of all, on the issue of deterrence which he

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

referred to. The advocates of the concept of nuclear deterrence refer to the alleged deterrent nature of nuclear weapons and assert that this is what has ensured and continues to ensure peace.

A deep analysis of the concept of nuclear deterrence was provided on 11 June at the meeting of the Conference by President Alfonsín of Argentina. The Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, V.F. Petrovsky, dwelt on this in detail in his statement to the Conference on 9 June, to which Ambassador Friedersdorf referred today. In the course of the spring session I had occasion to take the floor on this subject as well. This is why today I do not intend to provide an exhaustive analysis, and I shall simply confine myself to a few brief comments.

The vast destructive power of nuclear weapons is indeed a fundamentally new characteristic of modern weapons. On the one hand this quality can be described as that of a deterrent -- that cannot be denied. On the other hand it means that nuclear weapons leave no hope for any State to defend itself by means of military technology. This was clearly recognized in the Soviet-United States statement concerning the results of the Geneva summit meeting in November 1985. "A nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought". But if you recognize that there can be no victors in a nuclear war, then how can you plan a first nuclear strike? Over four decades since the war the world has more than once teetered on the brink of a nuclear catastrophe. True, no catastrophe has occurred so far. Maybe this was due in part to the deterrent nature of nuclear weapons. But is there any assurance that this deterrent factor will continue to operate in the future? To base plans for the future on the sole fact that the catastrophe has not yet occurred is in our view absurd.

Let us imagine an old person who is ill but doesn't want to go to the doctor, offering the following explanation: "I have lived for 70 years. I've never tried to be cured and I haven't died a single time, so I will live for 70 more years." The more sophisticated nuclear weapons are, the greater the role played by computer technology and automation then the less time remains to take decisions on which the existence of human civilization depends. If we recognize that nuclear weapons cannot be guarantors of peace, if we agree that, on the contrary, they represent a tremendous danger to the world, then we will inevitably be led to a renunciation of the use of nuclear weapons, the reduction and then the elimination of nuclear arms.

As for the approach taken by the Soviet Union to security issues, I should like to draw your attention to the following. But before I do that I should like to respond to Ambassador Friedersdorf's statement regarding our position at the negotiations on intermediate-range missiles. He appealed to us to look more critically at our position concerning Soviet missiles in this class in Asia. In this connection, I must point out that the United States has been steadily increasing its military strength, primarily in the nuclear category, in the Asia-Pacific region, especially close to the frontiers of socialist States in Asia. The number of delivery systems, mainly airborne, is being increased, and nuclear stockpiles are being enlarged on the ships of the United States Seventh Fleet and at United States bases in this area. It is striking, for instance, that deployment has begun in South Korea of United States "Lance" tactical nuclear missiles. And there is no guarantee

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

that the infrastructure created for these missiles cannot be used in future for other nuclear missile systems which are capable of striking the territories of the USSR, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China.

Bearing in mind the nuclear threat from the United States, and also the fact that the disarmament process has yet to go beyond discussions into practical actions, we are bound to keep a group of intermediate missiles in the Asian part of the USSR, which we are prepared to reduce to the level of 100 warheads. In a certain sense these intermediate missiles are intended to guarantee the security of more than the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Soviet Union is not doing anything, nor will it do anything, over and above what is dictated by the minimum requirements of its own security and the defence interests of its allies and friends.

In its desire to give impetus to nuclear disarmament, the Soviet Union is prepared, should an agreement be achieved with the United States on intermediate nuclear missiles in Europe, to come to an agreement on the elimination of intermediate nuclear missiles outside the European continent too. We have repeatedly stated that we are prepared to settle the question of the elimination of intermediate nuclear missiles on a global basis. We would have no difficulty in giving up the right to have 100 warheads on intermediate nuclear missiles in Asia if the United States were to accept the elimination of its nuclear arsenals in this area, as well as the withdrawal of its aircraft carriers beyond recognized limits. Of course, the United States would have no intermediate nuclear missiles on its own territory. As far as shorter-range missiles are concerned once agreement is reached on intermediate nuclear missiles, the Soviet Union is prepared to settle this on a global basis. United States Secretary of State, G. Shultz was told about this in April this year in Moscow. As matters turned out, it was the United States side itself which was not ready to consider a practical solution to this issue. We had to take this circumstance into account in drawing up our draft treaty on intermediate nuclear missiles. In the final analysis, the Soviet Union, as is well known, is in favour of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, which presupposes a "global zero" solution to the problem of intermediate nuclear missiles and shorter-range INFs. This is what I wanted to say regarding the specific issue of intermediate nuclear missiles and shorter-range missiles.

Now I should like to revert to our approach to the problem of nuclear deterrence and nuclear security in the broader context. As is well known, the session of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty had recently in Berlin adopted a document on the military doctrine of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty. It was issued as a document of this Conference (CD/755). From this document, it is clear that the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty adhere to a strictly defensive doctrine. This doctrine is subordinated to a single task, that of preventing war, whether nuclear or conventional. The strictly defensive nature of the doctrine of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty is manifested in their resolve never under any circumstances to initiate military action against any State or alliance of States unless they are themselves the target of an armed attack. It may be seen in their firm intention not to be the first to use

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nuclear weapons; in the absence of territorial claims on any other State, either in Europe or outside Europe; and in the fact that they do not view any State or any people as their enemy.

The document adopted in Berlin is no mere proclamation of principles, but a sort of programme of action for the development of military forces. The basis for this programme is the principle of sufficiency, whereby the allied States maintain their armed forces in a state of operational readiness that is sufficient to ensure that they are not caught unawares. Should they, however, be subjected to attack they will repel the aggressor. The allied socialist States do not intend to maintain armed forces and armaments beyond the scale required to meet these objectives.

In the document they adopted, the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty proposed to the member States of NATO that they should enter into consultations in order to compare the military doctrines of the two alliances, analyse their nature and jointly discuss the patterns of their future development so as to reduce the mutual suspicion and distrust that has accumulated over the years, to ensure a better perception of each other's intentions and to guarantee that the military concepts and doctrines of the two military blocs and their members are based on defensive principles. Unfortunately, the North Atlantic Alliance has so far not reacted to this proposal.

I will not now compare the military doctrines of the two blocs. This is the task of the proposed consultations. But I should like to draw your attention to one fundamental difference: our military doctrine contains the principle -- and the Soviet Union has assumed the corresponding obligation -- not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The other side rejects this principle, substituting for it the concept of deterrence, which allows for the first use of nuclear weapons at an early stage of the conflict.

Now I should like to say a few words about the issue of the cessation of nuclear testing, which was also referred to by Ambassador Friedersdorf today. The Soviet Union proposes a start to negotiations in any forum on a complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. This proposal is rejected by our opponents. We are also prepared to agree to intermediate measures. Quite recently the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, M.S. Gorbachev, put forward a proposal for a ban on explosions of over one kilotonne and the establishment of an annual quota of two or three explosions. We have not received a positive response to this proposal either.

Essentially, what the United States is proposing, and this was mentioned by Ambassador Friedersdorf today, simply boils down to a review of the system for monitoring compliance with the 1974 and 1976 agreements, one of which provides for a yield threshold of 150 kilotonnes. We do not oppose the ratification -- the earliest possible ratification -- of these treaties, but we must not lose sight of the ultimate goal which these negotiations should pursue: a complete and general ban on the testing of nuclear weapons.

The United States claims that it is impossible to embark on such negotiations on the grounds that it needs testing in order to perfect nuclear weapons, to verify their reliability, and it links the continuation of testing

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once again with the concept of nuclear deterrence. In this connection I have a question which I should like to put to the delegation of the United States. We all know that the concept of deterrence has been the basic concept in United States policy for over 40 years. None the less, until the beginning of the 1980s, the United States agreed to consider banning the testing of nuclear weapons not as a long-term but as an immediate goal, and without linking a test ban with the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. And this was something that they did not only in theory but also in practice. Up to the 1980s they participated in the trilateral negotiations on the nuclear-test ban, which made considerable headway, and all in all were close to a successful conclusion, until they were unilaterally broken off by the United States.

My question is the following. What happened at the beginning of the 1980s that forced the United States to change its position sharply? Up to the 1980s agreement was not achieved because verification difficulties were cited. Now there are no such difficulties. Now reference is made to something else: apparently nuclear testing can be halted only after the elimination of nuclear weapons. But then what is the point of this measure? Of course, when you have no nuclear weapons there will be nothing to test. We consider the cessation of nuclear testing as an important measure leading to the curtailment of the arms race, and this is precisely why we are already proposing to initiate negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear testing. Unfortunately -- and this was confirmed once again today by Ambassador Friedersdorf -- the United States is prepared to have only a non-negotiating mandate for the ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament.

One further brief comment in connection with today's statement by Ambassador Friedersdorf, regarding his invitation to me to accompany some experts to a chemical weapon destruction facility in Utah. As I understood him, he stressed that this invitation, this visit is considered as a confidence-building measure. In fact it can certainly only be considered as a confidence-building measure, because if I do go to that facility I'm hardly going to derive anything useful there for the negotiations on banning chemical weapons. In any case our experts say that they have no difficulties with the destruction of chemical weapons. They know how to do it. Consequently, this can hardly be anything other than a confidence-building measure. But I think that there are, in fact, considerably more effective confidence-building measures. As I see it, the main point which undermines confidence at the negotiations on chemical weapons are plans to develop binary weapons. Tell me, why participate in the preparation of a convention to ban and eliminate chemical weapons and at the same time take practical steps to develop a new generation of chemical weapons? Do such steps demonstrate the sincerity of the participants in the negotiations? I think that shelving these plans, these steps, would be a true confidence-building measure.

My brief comments have turned into a statement which was not all that brief, but on this note I will conclude.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the USSR, Ambassador Nazarkin, for his statement. Are there any members of the Conference who would like to make a statement? I see none. In this case I move to the second part of our meeting today, and as the distinguished representatives know, we have received requests from two non-member States to participate in the informal meetings on the substance of agenda item 2, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", which we will start discussing today immediately after this plenary meeting. In order to consider those requests before we start our informal discussions, I intend to suspend this plenary meeting briefly to consider informally according to our custom the two requests that I have just mentioned. If there are no objections, I shall now suspend this plenary meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. I should like to put before the Conference for decision working papers CD/WP.283 and 284 containing requests received from Finland and Norway to participate in the informal meeting devoted to the substance of agenda item 2, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". If there is no objection I shall take it that the Conference adopts the draft decisions.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Distinguished delegates, allow me now to make a brief statement to mark the conclusion of my period as President of the Conference during the month of June. The statement is a sort of progress report regarding the consultations that we have held on the procedural aspects of a number of pending topics on the agenda of the Conference. In doing so, I continue the tradition that has been established by a number of previous Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament. Although it is a relatively new tradition, nevertheless I believe in its usefulness as an affirmation of a joint responsibility between the President of the Conference and its members regarding the procedure and the process of work, with its negative and positive aspects, and also an affirmation of the ongoing nature of whatever consultations the President of the Conference undertakes in continuation of the process begun by his predecessor and up to the stage at which his successor will start, since this is made necessary by the very nature of the monthly presidential term.

The special consultations regarding the nuclear-test ban have been resumed on the basis of the draft mandate which was proposed by the neutral and non-aligned countries, and while some have welcomed this draft there are others who continue to study it. Some delegations still consider that the draft mandate which was proposed by the President of the Conference for the month of April constitutes an excellent basis for the consultations on this topic. I hope that we can reach agreement to re-establish the Ad hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban as soon as possible. Without trying to reach any prejudged conclusions, I believe that the solution must be a compromise one, which would reconcile the positions of the various groups without detriment to any of them. In spite of my awareness of the difficulty of reaching such a composite solution, nevertheless I believe that we can reach it by exerting further efforts and manifesting the political will to do so.

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At all events the Conference must avoid continuation of the current deadlock which surrounds the consideration of this topic, and any withdrawal from the framework of the Ad hoc Committee in which it has been examined.

It proved possible to reach an agreement regarding the holding of informal meetings of the Conference to examine the item on preventing the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. Undoubtedly the arrangements and the understanding that we have reached in this context are a step forward in comparison with the previous session of the Conference. I hope that the discussions that we will start today on this subject will help to establish a framework through which this topic will be examined to a larger extent during the next session in keeping with the mandate of the Conference as a multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament.

In spite of the obvious desire to reactivate the consultations concerning the topic of the prevention of nuclear war and what I have learnt of the manner in which some groups have assessed their positions, unfortunately we have not been able to translate this into a concrete reality. I feel sure that my successor, Ambassador Terreffe, the distinguished representative of Ethiopia, will continue these consultations during his presidency of the Conference, taking into consideration all the previous proposals regarding the most appropriate framework for the examination of this subject.

The positions of the groups regarding new types of weapons of mass destruction as well as new systems of these weapons remain unchanged. Nor have I noticed any change in the positions of the groups regarding the question of expansion of the membership of the Conference, and therefore I saw no real point in beginning intensive consultations on the subject. However, this subject should be a matter of concern for you during the next few weeks in order to avoid a situation in which the Conference would find itself once again obliged, when drafting its annual report, to record its inability to reach a decision on the subject and to respond to the membership applications presented to it.

This concludes my progress report for the period of my presidency. I would now like to wish my successor Ambassador Terreffe of Ethiopia every success for the period of July during his presidency of the Conference.

Before I conclude, please allow me to wish farewell to a highly esteemed colleague, a dear friend and brother, on the occasion of his departure after many years of distinguished activity at the Conference. Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka has carried out his duties as representative of his country with great ability and efficiency, and he has helped the Conference on Disarmament to reach compromise solutions on thorny questions during difficult periods through which it has passed. He will be sorely missed by his colleagues and friends, but I am sure that he will continue his close relationship with us in his new post as Director of UNIDIR, and I wish Ambassador Dhanapala every success in his new assignment and in the mission in which he believes, namely disarmament.

In conclusion I would like to express to you all my sincere gratitude for your co-operation with me during this month, and particularly the co-ordinators of the groups, with whom I had the honour of dealing closely. I

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would also like to thank my dear friend Ambassador Komatina, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the Conference, and Ambassador Berasategui, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, and all their colleagues for all the sincere efforts they have exerted to help me, and I would also like to thank all the staff working behind the scenes, whose voices we hear although we do not see them, the interpretation services who through their efforts have enabled us to carry on a fruitful dialogue and who have conveyed to us all the opinions regardless of linguistic differences. This concludes my statement. Before adjourning this meeting, does anyone wish to take the floor? Ambassador Fan, the distinguished representative of China.

Mr. FAN Guoxiang (China) (translated from Chinese): Thank you, Mr. President. In your statement you mentioned that the outstanding Ambassador Dhanapala is going to leave us, and today is the last day he is with us in the meeting. Tomorrow he will take up the post of head of UNIDIR. Mr. President, I fully agree with your appraisal of Ambassador Dhanapala. Ambassador Dhanapala is an outstanding representative of the non-aligned movement. At this forum and other forums on disarmament he submitted many positive proposals, thus playing a positive role. Ambassador Dhanapala is an outstanding representative of Sri Lanka, which maintains close relations with China. He has made important contributions to the friendly relations between the Chinese delegation and the Sri Lankan delegation.

The Chinese delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its gratitude for his co-operation and his contribution to the work of the CD. I personally also wish to thank him for his co-operation and help in my work. Although he is leaving the CD, and his departure means that we will lose a friend and outstanding colleague, to our regret, Ambassador Dhanapala will continue to display his talent and wisdom in another post. I am glad about this and wish him every success.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Ambassador Fan, representative of China to the Conference for his statement. I now give the floor to Ambassador Richard Butler, the representative of Australia to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Thank you, Mr. President. I did not intend to take the floor on this occasion, and will do so only very briefly because of the exceptional character of this occasion. Let me start first of all by saying that I did not find it necessary to make a statement in the formal plenary during the month of your presidency, and that deprived me of the opportunity of expressing what pleasure it causes my delegation to see you in the Chair, but as this is the end of your term as President, I think the most appropriate thing for me to say is our very deep debt of gratitude for the way in which you have conducted our affairs this month.

The exceptional occasion to which I referred is the departure from the Conference of Jayantha Dhanapala, a person I have known for in excess of 20 years, representative of a country with which mine has immensely close links. I won't belabour the point, but I want to make it clear that I consider the departure of Jayantha Dhanapala from this Conference a very

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severe loss to the Conference, and I feel it personally. The only consolation, and I think it is a more than adequate one, is that Jayantha Dhanapala will not be lost to the cause of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Ambassador Richard Butler for his kind words addressed to me and to our friend Ambassador Dhanapala. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of France.

Mr. MOREL (France) (translated from French): Thank you Mr. President. I merely wish to associate myself with the regrets and good wishes that mark the last day on which our colleague and friend Ambassador Dhanapala is performing his tasks as representative of his country to the Conference on Disarmament, and to add, because of the special interest that France has had from the outset in the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, UNIDIR, that we are convinced that under his guidance, with his remarkable competence, with the authority he has acquired in disarmament circles and which is clearly perceived by us all here -- we are certain that the Institute itself will recover the authority and influence I feel it needs in the interests of the international community as a whole. Thus I should like to wish him every success. These are my personal wishes, and the wishes of the French Government.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Ambassador Morel, representative of France, for the words he addressed to our dear friend Ambassador Dhanapala, and now I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Soviet Union.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, permit me, on the occasion of the conclusion of your term of office, to thank you for the very useful contribution you have made to the work of our Conference. As we know, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Ambassador J. Dhanapala, is leaving his post, and I should like to state the following. We regret to have to part from Ambassador J. Dhanapala, with whom we have built up relations of close and business-like co-operation. He is an outstanding diplomat with a deep knowledge of disarmament issues. At the same time, as Ambassador J. Dhanapala is moving to a new and important post, I should like to wish him great success in his new field and to express the hope that the relations of close, business-like and friendly co-operation that we have built up here at the Conference will continue in the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank distinguished Ambassador Nazarkin of the USSR for his kind words addressed to Ambassador Dhanapala and to me personally. Are there any other speakers who wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Yugoslavia.

Mr. CULAFIC (Yugoslavia): Thank you Mr. President. Allow me in the name of Ambassador Kosin and the whole Yugoslav delegation, as co-ordinator for the Group of 21 for the month of June, to express our great satisfaction at having had this opportunity to work closely with you under your very versatile guidance. I take this opportunity also to repeat the high appreciation of the

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work of Ambassador Dhanapala already expressed by Ambassador Kosin in the name of the Group of 21, and I wish to associate the Yugoslav delegation also, as co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for the month of June, with all the appreciation expressed here in this room today. I also wish to express our great satisfaction that we will have Ambassador Dhanapala in a very responsible job devoted to the cause of disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the distinguished representative of Yugoslavia for his statement on behalf of the Group of 21 and for his kind words addressed to Ambassador Dhanapala and to me, and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Mexico.

Mrs. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Thank you, Mr. President. I am certain that the head of my delegation, Ambassador Garcia Robles would have wished to be present today in order to leave on record his thanks to Ambassador Dhanapala for the work he has accomplished in this Conference. However, in his absence, it falls to me to speak, and it is for me an honour to address these words to Ambassador Dhanapala, since it has been my privilege to work closely with him and I have always learnt something from him, I have always gained something new from him, something that has remained with me and something that will be greatly helpful to me in my future career. I am convinced that Ambassador Dhanapala will discharge the duties entrusted to him with great success, and I should like to tell him that we shall miss him in this Conference. We shall miss his advice and his wisdom. We are nevertheless happy to know that he will continue to devote himself to the subject to which we ourselves are devoting this period.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the distinguished representative of Mexico for her statement in tribute to Ambassador Dhanapala. I now give the floor to Ambassador Dhanapala.

Mr. DHANAPALA (Sri Lanka): Thank you, Mr. President. I had not intended to take the floor on my last appearance in the CD, but I have been deeply touched by the very warm and generous references made to me by you personally and by so many of my friends and colleagues in the Conference. I am conscious that my intervention is delaying a very informal meeting on an important subject, item 2 of our agenda, and I would not want to be the cause of delaying work on this very important issue.

Let me very briefly begin by congratulating you on your successful tenure of office as President, in particular the achievement that you have registered in having successfully arranged an agreement to have an informal meeting on item 2. I would also like to acknowledge the presence here today of two distinguished visitors, Ambassador Kristvik of Norway and the Deputy Minister of Iran, whose contributions my delegation has listened to with great interest.

As has been noted today marks my final appearance in the Conference on Disarmament as head of the Sri Lanka delegation to this single multilateral negotiating body, to which Sri Lanka was admitted as a result of a decision of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In the three and a half years that I have been here, I have

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benefited greatly from the contributions made by so many delegations, from the co-operation and especially from the lesson in dedication and commitment to the ideal of disarmament that I have seen amongst the participants whose friendship and co-operation I have been privileged to have in the period I have been here. Physically my position has moved from, I think, the seat where the Federal Republic of Germany sits to where I am now, almost directly opposite you. And in that odyssey, if I may call it such, I had the privilege of occupying the seat which you occupy, Mr. President, in the month of April 1984, and again, as I said, of enjoying the co-operation and friendship of my colleagues.

In my diplomatic career, I think it is true to say that there are few other bodies as august as this where I have been privileged to work with so many distinguished and talented people dedicated to such a lofty goal as disarmament. That we have made little progress in achieving our goal I think is no reflection on the dedication of our efforts and the sincerity of our motives. It is, as in the case of all United Nations endeavours, the reflection of our times.

I would merely like to conclude by wishing you all success in your task, and expressing my thanks to all of you for having given me your friendship and co-operation. It has been noted that I do not leave the field of disarmament, and I will continue to be associated with you in that field, although not directly in the Conference on Disarmament. I have no doubt that my successor will be able to count on the same friendship and co-operation that you have extended to me.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Ambassador Dhanapala for his statement, in which I believe he has expressed many of the ideas that lead us to believe that Mr. Dhanapala has fulfilled his duty in the best possible manner. Accordingly, I believe that he will carry out his new functions with the same ability and with the same enthusiasm.

On behalf of all of you, I express to him our best wishes for success, and we shall always share with him our common aim of full and complete disarmament.

Before I adjourn this meeting I would like to inform you that His Excellency the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, Mr. Hans van den Broek, will be addressing the Conference at its next plenary meeting on Thursday, 2 July. May I suggest that, on that occasion, we start our plenary meeting at 10.30 a.m., and not 10 a.m., in order to facilitate arrangements relating to the visit of the Minister? I see no objection, so we shall proceed accordingly.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 2 July, at 10.30 a.m. As agreed in the timetable of meetings for this week, the Conference will hold the first informal meeting on the substance of agenda item 2 after I adjourn this meeting. I intend to open the informal meeting in five minutes' time. The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.