

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 3 March 1988, at 10. a.m.

President: Mr. Paul Joachim von Stülpnagel (Federal Republic of Germany)

The President: I declare open the 445th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand, the Honourable Cedric Russell Marshall, who is speaking at this plenary meeting today. His presence here proves once more the active interest that his country takes on the vital questions of disarmament, as shown by its active participation in the work of the Conference. Almost three years ago, on 5 March 1985, the Conference had the privilege of receiving the Prime Minister and then Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, the Right Honourable David Lange, who addressed the conference from this podium, thus becoming the first Head of Government ever to speak in this multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. I wish the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control a useful visit to Geneva.

In accordance with its programme of work, the conference continues its discussion of agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". However, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member who wishes to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of New Zealand and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

I now give the floor to the first speaker on my list, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand, The Honourable Cedric Russell Marshall.

Mr. Marshall (New Zealand): Mr. President, I would like first of all to express my gratitude to you for the warmth of your welcome, and to say what a pleasure it is to come into this forum and to have the opportunity to meet personally so many of the representatives. Perhaps it is a practice which we should adopt in other forums, although it may take a little longer. Can I express also my pleasure at your presidency during this month of March. As you are well aware, New Zealand and the Federal Republic of Germany have a very good relationship, and indeed, as I was saying to you earlier this morning, I was in Bonn only last week for discussions with your Foreign Minister and with various of his colleagues. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who have preceded you this year, Ambassador Morel of France and Ambassador Rose of the German Democratic Republic, and I wish you good wishes for the Conference's work this month.

Mr. President, I am honoured to take the floor at this Conference on Disarmament, following, as you have acknowledged, my Prime Minister, David Lange, who addressed you in 1985.

The CD, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, has a unique responsibility in helping to develop a safer world. That is a world in which ultimately no State will need to rely on weapons of mass destruction - whether nuclear, chemical or biological - for its security. A world which

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stations no weapons in space. A world where the forces of conflict on Earth are regulated in a fair and politically mature manner. That world must be brought into the focus of this Conference's sights.

New Zealand's commitment to disarmament remains a central part of this Government's policy. The establishment, a few months ago, of a portfolio of Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control within the New Zealand Cabinet is a further indication of the importance New Zealand attaches to the disarmament process. It is a single honour for me to fill this important office, as well as being Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In addition to my ministerial portfolio, we have set up in New Zealand a Public Advisory Committee on Disarmament and Arms Control. The Committee draws on the skills of individuals with broad experience in various aspects of disarmament work. Its task is to advise the Government on policy. We have also established a separate division of disarmament and international security within our Foreign Ministry to handle the subject.

A few months ago New Zealand made its first contribution to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. This is a token of support for the independent and intellectually sound work that must be done in this area if real progress in mutual understanding and negotiations is to be facilitated. Today I can inform you that we will make a second and increased contribution to UNIDIR this year.

New Zealand wants to become a full, participating member of the Conference on Disarmament. Our credentials for doing so are strong. Our commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations has, I believe, been clearly demonstrated both here and in New York. In the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, and special conferences such as that on disarmament and development we have been making a full contribution to the disarmament process. Since 1984 we have had observer status with this Conference. We could make a further contribution to your Conference's work if we were on a more equal footing with other members.

We recognize that this objective will not be easily achieved. It is not New Zealand's intention to try to jump the membership queue, displacing others who have already made claims for membership. Nor is it the intention to derail current expansion plans, which we hope might proceed expeditiously. Rather, we would think that the opportunity should be taken at the forthcoming special session on disarmament to examine the entire negotiating, deliberative and research machinery in the disarmament field. This would allow us to assess how each element might function more efficiently, both individually and as part of the whole. As part of this process of assessment, the composition of the CD should be examined with a view to ensuring that all States with a material contribution to make to its work are able to do so.

New Zealand has been a dedicated supporter of the United Nations since 1945, when we played an active part at San Francisco in helping to draw up the Charter. The main concern of San Francisco was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. This objective is even more imperative today than it was then. The capacity to destroy life on Earth places an enormous psychological and moral burden on all nations, on all peoples. That is why

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New Zealand has as a top priority the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and a stable international security order. That is why I announced at last year's General Assembly New Zealand's willingness to step up its participation in United Nations peace-keeping operations.

New Zealand recognizes that the ultimate goal of the international community cannot be a complete absence of arms. The realistic objective is security for all peoples at optimally low force levels. Our policy on nuclear disarmament takes as its basic premise the belief that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The reduction of pressures which might lead to nuclear war, and the elimination of the means to engage in it, are cardinal objectives which New Zealand supports.

The collective security arrangements which have existed over the past 40 years have made a significant contribution to keeping the world free from conflict on a global scale. The many conflicts that have broken out have been local and regional in nature, and based on the use of conventional and non-nuclear weaponry. They have been no less appalling for that. But for much of that time and for both East and West, nuclear deterrence has played, and continues to play, an important role in those security arrangements and the maintenance of peace at the global level.

However, those very efforts to maintain a balance of security have resulted in the commitment of enormous resources and the accumulation of excessive levels of nuclear and conventional arms. This is an untenable position for the international community. We all have a responsibility to find another approach to ensuring the maintenance of international security.

The first steps have already been taken. The historic INF agreement of last year constitutes the qualitative breakthrough in disarmament that the world has waited for. It demonstrates that it is not necessary to increase the numbers of nuclear weapons to preserve security. It shows that the arms race can be turned back and that alternatives to the endless accumulation of nuclear weapons are not only desirable but achievable. The political vision that made the INF Treaty possible should provide the impetus for progress in the complex area of strategic weaponry.

But it is not sufficient for other States simply to applaud this achievement from the sidelines. The international community as a whole must support the United States and the Soviet Union in their endeavours, but it must also have an active role itself in the disarmament process. These encouraging developments in the bilateral area must be matched by achievements in the multilateral field, with the two processes working in parallel, buttressing and underpinning each other. Many issues are simply not capable of resolution by the two largest nuclear Powers alone. They require multilateral action. Chemical weapons, nuclear non-proliferation and a nuclear test ban are obvious examples.

The CD has yet to realize its potential in many important areas of its agenda. Despite repeated calls by the United Nations for a comprehensive nuclear test ban, it has not proved possible to break the impasse that has strangled effective multilateral progress in this area for so long. New Zealand welcomes the bilateral stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear

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testing currently under way. But these negotiations are no substitute for the urgent conclusion of a CTB. They can complement but they cannot replace. They envisage an end to testing only in the long-term context when nuclear weapons are eliminated. And they do not bring other nuclear Powers, nor non-nuclear States, into the process. These bilaterals should serve as an incentive and as an example to the CD to overcome its obstacles and commence its own work on a nuclear test ban. There has been much excellent work done already on seismic verification, including the establishment of a global seismic network. There seems to me to be no good reason why these and other matters cannot be sorted out in the CD while, at the same time, the United States and the Soviet Union continue with their stage-by-stage reduction in testing. But, Sir, you need a committee to do it.

In positive contrast to this experience, the work in the CD on chemical weapons has been impressive. The draft Convention contains language on most of the provisions necessary for an effective ban. There is consensus that all chemical weapons should be destroyed. But there are continuing reports of the current use and proliferation of chemical weapons. It is imperative that no effort be spared to ensure that the negotiations succeed. New Zealand does not have, and has never had, chemical weapons, and it does not permit chemical weapons to be stationed on its territory. Chemical and biological weapons are, in our view, equally abhorrent. Both categories should be completely eliminated. The benefits of doing so for other disarmament negotiations, both on nuclear and conventional weapons, would, we think, be immense. They could prove decisive. We think, too, that our own security would be enhanced were chemical weapons to be eliminated. We expect that our civilian industry would wish to co-operate fully with the agreed verification arrangements concerning non-production of chemical weapons.

New Zealand is impressed by the scale of the negotiations on chemical weapons and the wealth of ideas that delegations have submitted. These include initiatives that, in recent times, have helped bring the existence of chemical weapons into the open and to reveal the full dimensions of the problem with which the negotiators are grappling. So, too, have there been interesting suggestions to improve the negotiating process which deserve close attention. So much material is available, and so many ideas continue to be submitted, that it cannot be beyond the Conference to resolve the difficult issues ahead. We have been pleased at the commitment to the negotiations expressed by the major participants. With a willingness to compromise, the details of consensus and agreement will surely appear. The goal is too important for it to be otherwise.

Nuclear testing and chemical weapons are essentially global issues. No country, no matter how small or how isolated, is immune to them. In an increasingly multipolar world, where consultation and co-operation are becoming even more complicated, yet even more necessary, New Zealand is in a special position. We have strong and unbreakable Western ties but, because of our geography and the links we have developed with our Pacific and Asian neighbours, we also have a role to play in helping to bridge the gaps that divide us all.

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New Zealand brings to this body a distinctively regional perception in security thinking. The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty - the Treaty of Rarotonga - was a regional initiative to contribute to the safety and security of our part of the globe. It is an appropriate policy for the South Pacific. By the same token, it preserves the rights of countries from outside the region to transit and operate freely on the high seas.

New Zealand welcomes the decision by China and the Soviet Union to support the Protocols to this Treaty. I understand that the Soviet Union has now decided to ratify it without reservation. This will mean that two nuclear Powers have extended important guarantees concerning the use of nuclear weapons in our region. We would hope that the other nuclear Powers that have yet to sign the Protocols will review their decisions and help us in the South Pacific add strength to the Treaty and to the cause of peace in the southern hemisphere.

The Treaty of Rarotonga, important though it is, is only a contributing factor to regional security. New Zealand believes that a state of security cannot be achieved simply by addressing disarmament or eliminating military threats to security. Threats to security come in many forms. Economic self-sufficiency and political stability play critical roles in contributing to regional and indeed global security. New Zealand works hard in the South Pacific to contribute to overall security in the broadest sense. For many Pacific island countries economic problems are the greatest threat to their security. Together with other countries, we therefore seek to foster development and help lift living standards in the region.

Are there any lessons that can be derived from our South Pacific experience? It is evident from what I have said that disarmament policies have to be both appropriate to regional circumstances and balanced against broader strategic imperatives.

New Zealand's national nuclear-free zone must be viewed in a different way from the regional zone. It is drawn from a common well - an intense dislike of nuclear weapons - but it is a different policy with different objectives. The New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act, passed in our Parliament only last year, does a number of things. One is a prohibition on any vessel or aircraft which the Prime Minister considers may be carrying nuclear weapons. This derives from our repudiation of nuclear weaponry. As Prime Minister Lange said in this Conference three years ago: "My country has no nuclear weapons. It has no intention of ever acquiring any. It asks others not to bring nuclear weapons to New Zealand. It does not ask to be defended by them." This is a policy that has broad public support in New Zealand. It is a national policy, however, that has been developed for our own strategic circumstances in our particular part of the world. We recognize that the circumstances of other countries and other regions are very different.

1988 offers the opportunity for the third special session on disarmament to move the multilateral process forward. There have been recent breakthroughs in bilateral negotiations. These must act as an inspiration to us in multilateral forums. At the same time, further progress bilaterally is likely to be helped by what we can achieve in our multilateral work and by the

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energy that all the participants bring to the task. The objective at the special session should be to agree on a meaningful disarmament agenda to take us well in the the 1990s, perhaps to the end of the twentieth century. We cannot allow ourselves to be deterred by the magnitude of the task. The international community must grasp the opportunity, in a spirit of flexibility and compromise, to make our world a safer place.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand for his statement and for the kind words expressed to the former and present Presidents. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasserli.

Mr. NASSERLI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am addressing this august gathering as the new Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the first time. It is indeed a great privilege and honour for me to be here among distinguished diplomats of high calibre with vast experience, knowledge and expertise.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all of those who have, in their statements at the plenary, expressed their words of welcome to me, I assure all delegations of our readiness for full and extensive co-operation.

Mr. President, allow me also to congratulate you on your presidency for the month of March in this sole multinational negotiating body for the most important issue of our time, and to wish you every success in carrying out your heavy responsibility. My congratulations go also to Ambassador Rose for his excellent efforts in February, and to Ambassador Morel of France for his outstanding work in completing the 1987 session of the Conference.

Judging by the number of statements made by honourable high-level personalities like the one we have just heard from His Excellency the Foreign Minister of New Zealand, and the depth in which they have dealt with the issues, in addition to the full and extensive participation of the delegations in the deliberations and debates in the plenary and the working groups and committees, we should be able to say that we have had a good and fresh start, and to hope that 1988 will be a year for major steps forward in disarmament.

Unfortunately, however, we do not yet seem to have been able to take good advantage of this momentum. On many issues on the agenda, no real progress is foreseen and, even in the case of the convention on chemical weapons, there is concern that the tremendous efforts and achievements made thus far are giving way to stagnation. It is all so clear that, in most of these cases, it is not problems of technical nature only that impede further progress. Experience has proven, time and again, that a major essential ingredient is political will, which, when present, makes the most difficult and complicated problems look easy. We hope that the situation will evolve as we prepare ourselves for the third special session on disarmament.

This intervention has been intended as a brief statement of courtesy to the Conference and to my distinguished colleagues. As such, I shall refrain at this stage from entering into substantive discussion and examination of the different items on the agenda. My delegation has been actively participating in the ad hoc committees, and working groups, and we shall make every effort

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to continue and enhance our contribution in the deliberations involving the details of the issues. I shall also leave elaboration on our general positions vis-à-vis various aspects of disarmament currently being negotiated in the Conference for a later date, as I hope and expect that our Foreign Minister will be making a visit here in the near future to present an overview on the discussion.

With much regret, however, I shall have to briefly touch upon an issue which has been, and still continues to be, a serious matter of concern for us. Although due to its political aspects it is a subject to be dealt with in other forums, it does concern this Conference on one very basic and fundamental question. How much respect can we expect from States for the international agreements we try so hard to formulate in the form of conventions, protocols or others? And what can be done in order to ensure and enhance such respect? Our experience during the last seven and half years has been sad and discouraging indeed.

In his eloquent statement a few weeks ago, Foreign Minister Genscher stressed that armed forces and military capabilities should be exclusively geared to defence needs and be void of the capacity of invasion. Though the statement was made more in the context of East-West relations, it does also embody a message of wider scope. In fact, the Charter of the United Nations, the most fundamental instrument to govern international relations among States, and hence, the entire United Nations apparatus, was constructed with the objective of suppressing notions and acts of invasion and aggression and thus maintaining peace and security in the world.

When Iraq invaded Iran on 22 September 1980, it was our expectation, our naïve expectation, that the international community would express its outrage and utilize all means provided in the Charter to "suppress" this aggression. We continued with our naïve perceptions later as Iraq engaged in assaults on commercial shipping and civilian aircraft, and resorted to chemical weapons and attacks on civilian populated centres. The result? Not only did Iraq not face any measures of at least a deterrent nature, but it was even encouraged, and still is, by some countries permanently represented in the Security Council.

Distinguished delegates are all aware of the recent unfortunate resumption of attacks on civilians by Iraq. Once again it is civilians that are being made targets of destructive weaponry. No matter what military objectives are being pursued, it is a position of principle that nothing can justify attacks on defenceless people. Iraq and countries supporting Iraq are wrong in their assumption that such brutal acts may affect the course of the war. It is an experience much too often put to the test, an experience that has served, always, only to strengthen us and further increase our resolve to defend ourselves against these attacks. Iran has also proved that it can use its own military capabilities in order to deter Iraq from the unabated continuation of inhuman acts.

But, for the sake of humanity, and humanity alone, may I be permitted to appeal to the conscience of the members of the Conference to employ all means available to them to bring about an end to the attacks on civilians and ensure respect for the 1949 Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in armed



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conflicts? At stake is the sanctity of international agreements and commitments. I apologize if I sound a bit pessimistic in my first statement here. It is not my intention at all. The intention is only to note our concern, and hope that the painful experiences we have had to go through will make us all more alert in our efforts to bring about new international agreements and to ensure the highest possible respect for them.

This is particularly true for the convention on prevention of the production, development, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, a major issue of importance in current negotiations. Progress continues on finalizing its provisions, from general definitions to declarations and modes of verification. Yet the key question remains without a definite answer. What should be done, by whom and how against possible violations by States, signatories or not? In the absence of a concrete response to this question, the achievement of universality for the new convention remains doubtful.

I promised to be brief on this first statement, and I will leave the rest of the positions for my Minister when he attends this Conference later on.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Does any other representative wish to take the floor? This does not seem to be the case.

I should like now to turn to another matter. The secretariat has circulated today the timetable 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 subsidiary bodies, and as usual is merely indicative and subject to change, if needed. In that connection, I should like to note that consultations have been proceeding successfully on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". We will therefore be in a position to decide on this question at our next plenary meeting, to be held on Tuesday 8 March. Accordingly, no provision is made in the timetable for a meeting on Tuesday afternoon, as this time will be used by the re-established committee once we have formalized our agreement on the morning of the same day. On this understanding, I propose that we adopt the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before we adjourn, I should like to inform members that, at our next plenary meeting, we shall receive a visit from participants in a meeting convened by Women in Action for Disarmament, Justice and Peace, who are gathering in Geneva on International Women's Day to prepare for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. They will address a message to the Conference which, as in previous years, will be read out by the Secretary-General of the Conference.

That concludes our business for today. I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday 8 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.