

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 5 March 1987, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Lechuga Hevia

(Cuba)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 394th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference today continues the consideration of agenda item 5, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, however, any member wishing to do so may raise any other matter related to the work of that Conference.

Once we have heard all the speakers on my list for today, I intend to suspend the plenary meeting in order to consider the requests by non-member States to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee re-established under agenda item 5, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. Immediately after the informal meeting, we shall resume the plenary meeting to formalize any agreements we have reached informally.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of Italy, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Czechoslovakia and Australia. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Pugliese.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy): Mr. President, please allow me at the outset to associate myself with the warm congratulations and good wishes that have been extended to you on your taking over the high office of President of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of March. We are all confident that under your guidance the Conference shall be able to successfully move into the substantive phase of our deliberations. I wish, at the same time, to associate myself with all the delegations in expressing all our appreciation to Ambassador Fan Guoxiang of China who had the difficult task of presiding over this Conference during the month of February, a time of particular significance for the work of the entire session. Thanks to his intelligent and constructive action and to the dynamism with which he carried out his duties, considerable progress has already been made. We all owe to Ambassador Fan Guoxiang the achieving of the very impressive outcome of re-establishing in the very first month of our work a total of five ad hoc committees on some priority items of our agenda. May I also take this opportunity, being myself a newcomer, to welcome other colleagues who have recently joined us, and thanking my other distinguished colleagues for the warm welcome they have extended to me. I wish to assure you all of the full co-operation of the Italian delegation. It is also my desire on this occasion to remember Ambassador Donald Lowitz whom I had the chance to meet only too briefly. Nevertheless, I could fully appreciate his human and professional qualities. I wish to reiterate, through you, Mr. President, the sincere condolences of the Italian delegation to his family and to the United States delegation.

The practice of prefacing statements in the general debate of the Conference with comments on the international political situation and on the state of the East-West dialogue, particularly in the field of disarmament, reflects the awareness that our work is certainly not taking place in a vacuum, but instead is influenced by various intertwined developments.

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

On the one hand, it is the view of my Government that we have ground for feeling encouraged by the latest developments in the US-USSR nuclear and space talks and that, in particular, the Reykjavik meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev allowed significant progress to be made and opened new possibilities of great interest. We hope that difficulties in the way of concrete agreements will soon be overcome and that this will grant a radical reduction of nuclear arsenals, in line with the expectations of all peoples of the world.

In this framework, we are of course aware of the interconnections existing between various aspects of the strategic equation. But we also recognize the enormous difficulties involved in trying to deal with, and agree on, solutions for all such aspects at the same time. This is why the Italian Government is in favour of a pragmatic approach that should make it possible to keep separate questions that are not homogeneous, and to conclude concrete agreements for the reduction of arsenals in a context of stability, whenever that may be possible.

On the other hand, the sinister echo of gunfire continues to be heard in many regions of the world and that reminds us, all too sharply, that the world situation is fraught with great uncertainty and that the arms race is the practical expression of feelings of insecurity and distrust.

Men and women throughout the world long for peace. But well-turned speeches and proclamations of good intentions are useless if in practice they are contradicted by recourse to force and the open flouting of international law.

The Italian Government has always endeavoured -- and intends to spare no effort -- to ensure the elimination of all obstacles and all threats to peace.

Peace in a context of security is a fundamental cornerstone of our foreign policy, and we are committed to working towards this goal by a continuous process of consistent and responsible decisions and conduct. This is the purpose of our loyal participation in the Atlantic Alliance, a defensive community which has provided a significant contribution to the maintenance of peace and security in the world in recent years. The same peaceful approach underlies our membership to the European Community, an association of free peoples sharing a common heritage of traditions and culture.

Italy believes that the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, in a framework of stability, transparency of intentions and capabilities and of general respect for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, is the basic condition for a true and positive peace. That must be and remain our final goal and we must make every effort to gradually achieve it, if we really want to prepare a better future for mankind. Intermediate goals with a view to that final result might be represented by the establishment of a balance of forces, both

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

in the nuclear and conventional field, at lower and lower, indeed at the lowest possible, levels of armaments to ensure the maintenance of defence capabilities and stability.

We acknowledge that security perceptions and requirements differ in the various regions of the world, they differ indeed from country to country. We respect all approaches to security issues by all countries since we believe that only through the preservation of security it is possible to undertake collective steps toward effective disarmament. At the same time we feel entitled to respect for our own policy which, while looking upon deterrence as an essential element to our national security, does pursue security and equilibrium at the lowest levels of all types of armaments.

For many years the question of the ban on nuclear testing in all environments has been one of the main issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. It is therefore regrettable that this forum has been unable to find a way out of the procedural "imbroglio" which has prevented it, for more than two years now, from continuing practical work on this matter. My Government remains firmly committed to the pursuit of a verifiable comprehensive test ban.

As this delegation has often reiterated, the Italian Government is in favour of a CTBT and attaches great importance and significance to the accomplishment of progress towards such an objective. Naturally we do not ignore that the problem of a comprehensive test ban cannot be discussed separately from other issues concerning disarmament and strategic stability. Therefore it is our view that positive results would best be achieved through a step-by-step approach, and that a solution would be easier if substantial and balanced reductions in number and quality of offensive weapons could be agreed upon and implemented.

Another important aspect of this problem is verification. In fact, Italy believes that a test-ban treaty would be unacceptable unless it contained adequate provisions for verification to ensure compliance by all parties. This issue is really a key one, because clandestine nuclear testing might have far-reaching consequences for the general framework of international security and stability. In our opinion, verification problems can be gradually solved also through improved technology, and allow for the implementation of a step-by-step approach to a CTB. In this context a first significant step would certainly be represented by the ratification of the TTB Treaty of 1974 and of the PNE Treaty of 1976. The Italian Government has been encouraged by the talks held between the United States and the USSR in Geneva on the possibility of limitations on tests and considers this to be of good omen also for the work of this Conference on this specific issue.

My delegation remains convinced of the value of further concrete work towards a comprehensive test ban at this Conference. Several substantive Working Papers on behalf of a group of Western States members of the Conference have been tabled on various aspects of a CTB and have not yet been discussed thoroughly.

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

My delegation is therefore eager to resume our practical work on all the substantive aspects of a CTB and in particular on such key issues as scope, verification and compliance, in line with our commitment to make any possible effort towards the goal of bringing about a cessation of all nuclear tests. We have pointed out many times our willingness to begin work immediately on a concrete examination of essential issues that would be involved in a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The draft mandate contained in document CD/521 is a proposal by which we continue to stand. In our firm view, that mandate, if adopted, would lead immediately to the creation of a subsidiary body in which a substantive examination of central issues relevant to the formulation of a CTBT could be undertaken with a view to negotiation of a treaty on the subject. We have further exemplified our position on this item in a detailed way by presenting a suggested programme of work for an ad hoc committee under item 1, which is included in document CD/621.

My Government recognizes also that these issues are complex and difficult to solve and that they should be thoroughly examined in a constructive way, i.e., by sitting down together, in a properly mandated ad hoc committee, and working together to try to resolve them.

The negotiation of a global ban on the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons, which seems to us one of the most important and urgent disarmament goals, has achieved encouraging progress during the 1986 session. Steps forward have been made regarding a more efficient compilation of Articles III, IV and V; a great amount of work was also accomplished by Working Group A with regard to Article VI, in connection with the criteria and the listing of the various categories of chemicals. As for Article IX, we wish to express our appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom and to Mr. Wisnoemoerti of Indonesia: the four points on which Ambassador Cromartie detected a convergence of views constitute, in the opinion of the Italian delegation, a sound basis for a solution of the key issue of on-challenge verification.

Indeed, while not minimizing the importance of other outstanding items, I believe that, after all, the success of our work depends largely on our capability to reach an agreement on a convention banning chemical weapons and that consequently we should aim at conclusive results during this year. The main difficulties lying ahead in this context are still connected with the problem of verification which, indeed, is not simply a technical one. It is a problem having an obvious political dimension; admittedly, verification can also have a confidence-building effect.

By envisaging a verification system for a convention banning all chemical weapons and prescribing their removal from the military arsenals we believe that the Italian delegation is aware that "intrusive" and stringent forms of verification may sometimes be seen by some as restraining national sovereign discretion to a certain extent, or as being prejudicial to the protection of national industrial and commercial secrets. However, we are convinced that such concerns should be overcome through a careful assessment and a better knowledge of the implications of different types of verification, in a spirit

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

of mutual co-operation and goodwill. Moreover, we believe that the elimination of such a hideous category of weapons and the confidence that an eventual ban is being loyally complied with, are priority goals for all countries and, especially, for those, such as Italy, which have long renounced the chemical military option.

It is vital to ensure that prohibited chemicals are neither manufactured in previous production facilities, nor in new ones; that States should not manufacture "single purpose" chemical warfare agents or their precursors and that "dual-purpose" agents or precursors should not be diverted to warfare purposes.

We are convinced that an effective verification system should include systematic inspections and "on-challenge" inspections of a stringent nature. On this question, there are two Western Working Papers on the table: CD/500 by the delegation of the United States and CD/715 by the delegation of the United Kingdom. My Government considers it essential that a verification of compliance should represent a basic obligation. On the other hand States signing the Convention have also the right to demonstrate their compliance with it, when they are faced with a challenge. In this respect the Italian delegation considers that the recent proposals made by the USSR delegation on 17 February last, while still requiring some expansion of their scope, represent an interesting contribution and may hold promise of constructive negotiations.

My delegation shares with others the awareness of the importance and urgency attached to agenda item 5, concerning the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Indeed, my Government addresses this issue with the highest interest and sense of priority. Therefore we wish first of all to express our deepest satisfaction for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee almost at the very beginning of this session of the Conference.

My Government believes that an arms race in outer space should be prevented, that in the context of a general and complete disarmament outer space should be devoted to preaceful activities, and that the exploration and use of outer space should be carried out for the benefit of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic and scientific development.

In this respect the two major space and nuclear Powers share the greatest responsibility in the search for effective and verifiable agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. I believe that there is a general awareness that a competitive drive towards the deployment of armaments in outer space would be a costly and undesirable endeavour.

Current trends in the bilateral talks here in Geneva allow us to hope for a constructive approach in spite of the complexities of the issues involved. In this context we believe that it will be most important for the major space Powers to agree on a common approach in dealing with these problems, including those connected with the offence-defence relationship.

(Mr. Pugliese, Italy)

It is of the utmost importance to make sure that space research and activities are consistent with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and that they are aimed at solely defensive purposes.

This Conference can play an important and useful role in the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space which has an essential interest for all States. During the last session, the Ad Hoc Committee, despite a regrettable delay in getting down to substantive work, was able to clarify some important aspects concerning the existing legal régime in relation to arms control in outer space, to consider some relevant issues, and to examine some of the activities which are currently being carried out in outer space. We hope that this work will be continued, with renewed energy this year and that further progress in the examination of the complex and various issues connected with this item will be achieved.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the events of the past months have shown to be full of promise for our work in this Conference. We want to foster our efforts in order to build on what has so far been accomplished. For this purpose we shall try to take advantage of all available avenues constantly bearing in mind the essential requirements of international security and stability.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): On 4 March the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons completed, as you know, the consideration of a cluster of issues relating to chemical weapon stockpiles. This offers an opportunity to take stock of the first results of this year's negotiations on a convention banning chemical weapons.

On the whole we are satisfied with the intensive start made in the negotiations in the Ad Hoc Committee under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Ekéus. It is our hope that in future this momentum will be maintained in the negotiations.

In its statement in the plenary of the Conference on 17 February, the Soviet delegation, wishing from the outset to give a fresh impetus to the negotiations, outlined a number of proposals with a view to reaching a speedy agreement on the question assigned to the first cluster for discussion. These proposals contained comprehensive provisions for declarations to be made by each State party to a future convention specifying detailed information on locations of chemical weapon stocks (storage facilities) at the time the convention enters into force; for closure of storage facilities and prevention of movement of stocks; and for effective verification of the closed storage facilities on the basis of systematic international inspections along with permanent use of instruments. The positive significance of these proposals has just been noted by the distinguished representative of Italy, Ambassador Pugliese.

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

Until recently, the fact that the question of declarations of storage facilities remained unresolved gave rise to a pessimistic view of the prospects for a speedy conclusion of the convention. In presenting its proposals the Soviet Union proceeded from the interest of finding without delay a solution to this question. We are satisfied that these proposals of ours have made it possible to take a major step forward at the negotiations and we hope that progress on the question of declaration and international verification of chemical stockpile locations will have a positive effect on the work on other subjects and on the whole process of the subsequent negotiations.

Wishing to maintain the momentum in our work, the Soviet delegation is making a proposal for a resolution to the question of a time-frame for elimination of chemical weapons, in view of the situation which has emerged at the negotiations. As you know, the Soviet Union's earlier proposal, motivated by the desire to see the process of chemical weapon destruction initiated as quickly as possible, was that this destruction should begin not later than six months after the convention enters into force. That proposal met with objections, in particular from the United States, which stated that it was not ready to proceed to the elimination of chemical weapons shortly after the convention entered into force. In view of this fact, we are prepared not to insist on our proposal which, of course, remains valid, and we do not object to beginning the destruction of chemical weapons not later than after one year. We are also prepared, taking into account that the convention would provide for permanent international verification of chemical weapon destruction facilities and the full responsibility of States for the way those facilities operate, not to insist that such facilities should in all cases be State-owned. We expect that these additional proposals will make it possible to find appropriate solutions.

As the documents of the Ad Hoc Committee indicate, a number of provisions of article 4 ("chemical weapons") and Annex 4 have not been finalized yet. There are naturally various reasons for that -- objective difficulties and complicated technical issues which have yet to be resolved -- but we cannot ignore the obstacles which might very well not have been there had all delegations adopted a constructive approach.

This applies above all to the question of destruction of chemical weapons. On 17 February the Soviet Union proposed that all chemical weapons should be destroyed. In presenting that proposal we took into account the difficulties referred to by the United States delegation which had for a long time been opposed to the very concept of diversion of chemical weapons for permitted purposes. Wishing to meet the concerns of our partners in the negotiations we withdrew our requirement that a State should have the right to decide on the ways of eliminating chemical weapon stockpiles, although I should point out that our arguments that diversion might be economically justified remain valid. It appeared that since we accepted the United States position agreement was at hand. However, the United States delegation has again blocked agreement and, quite contrary to its previous position, has suddenly begun to insist on diversion of chemical weapon stocks. This fact is of course regrettable. The Soviet delegation reaffirms its willingness to

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

seek a solution to the question of the elimination of chemical weapons. That requires now, above all, that the United States delegation should present concrete proposals on the types and quantities of chemical weapons the United States would like to divert.

One of the most difficult of the outstanding questions is the problem of the order of elimination of chemical weapon stocks. Discussions on the question have shown above all the technical difficulties involved in working out a so-called equivalent unit for comparing various categories of chemicals. In view of this fact and of possible differences in the composition of chemical weapon stockpiles we would like to propose that the following order of elimination of chemical weapon stockpiles be discussed. Firstly, the whole elimination period shall be divided into nine one-year periods. Secondly, within each one-year period a State party shall eliminate one-ninth of its chemical-weapon stockpiles in each of the existing categories. Thirdly, a State party may carry out the elimination of chemical weapons at a faster pace than under the agreed order of elimination.

We would be interested to hear the views of other delegations on these questions. The Soviet delegation is prepared, in the course of further negotiations, to seek mutually acceptable solutions on the question of the order of elimination of chemical weapons. It is our hope that by the end of the spring session of the Conference the full text of Article 4 and Annex 4 will be finalized.

The Soviet Union is in favour of achieving, as a matter of principle, the prompt and complete elimination of chemical weapons and the industrial base for their production. The Soviet side has made repeated statements to this effect on a number of occasions, including at the highest level. In this context we should like once again to draw your attention to the statement of General Secretary Gorbachev of 15 January 1986, in which it was stated inter alia that "We are prepared to ensure a timely declaration of the location of enterprises producing chemical weapons and the cessation of their production, and we are ready to start developing procedures for destroying the relevant industrial base and to proceed, soon after the Convention enters into force, to the elimination of the stockpiles of chemical weapons".

This statement makes it clear beyond any doubt that in pursuing chemical disarmament we do not seek unilateral disarmament of the other side. In case such a convention is concluded chemical weapons and the production base for their manufacture are to be destroyed by all States possessing such weapons, including both the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is now proceeding to the consideration of the cluster of questions relating to non-production of chemical weapons in the commercial (civil) industry. This, if anything, is the most difficult aspect of the convention. In November 1986 the Soviet Union made a series of proposals on the subject which, as is widely recognized, have considerably advanced the negotiations. Today we would like to present some new ideas on this question.

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

Important work lies ahead in order to finalize the lists for various categories of chemicals which would be subjected to different régimes of limitation and verification. We expect category I, along with super-toxic lethal chemicals possessing a set of properties characteristic of chemical warfare agents and key components of binary chemical weapons, to cover incapacities as well.

The viability of a future convention will be ensured only when it is able to keep pace with the times and the achievements of applied and fundamental chemistry and to prevent the development of chemical weapons. This purpose could be served among other things by basic guidelines for revision of the lists of chemicals which would be initially included in the convention. We propose that such a revision be carried out both on a periodical (annual) basis and at the request of any State party as new chemicals appear, as the production technology for such chemicals develops, and on the basis of the declarations by States of their chemical weapon stockpiles.

One of the possible loop-holes for breaching the convention might be through the commercial production of super-toxic lethal chemicals. Nobody denies the risk to the convention posed by the high level of toxicity of these chemicals, for toxicity is the determining property of a chemical warfare agent. Consequently there should be a general interest in removing this risk.

As you know, at one time the Soviet Union proposed applying most stringent prohibition measures to the production of super-toxic lethal chemicals. This position, however, met with objections from a number of parties to the negotiations, based on commercial consideration, who argued in favour of preserving the procedure and methods of production of these chemicals in the commercial industry existing in their countries. Back in 1985, at the initiative of Western delegations, provisions were developed for a division of super-toxic lethal chemicals into two categories: super-toxic lethal chemicals used in chemical weapons and super-toxic lethal chemicals which cannot be used in chemical weapons. At the time this agreement which provided for international on-site verification of the production of these chemicals was welcomed by Western countries as a major success in the negotiations.

In preparing its proposals which were presented in November 1986 the Soviet Union took into account the position of Western countries and agreed to divide super-toxic lethal chemicals into two categories and spelled out specific ideas on a régime for permitted production of such chemicals. The way to work the finalization of the relevant provisions of the convention now seemed open. However, the issue of permitted production of super-toxic lethal chemicals began to slide: one would not wish to believe that in the place of progress towards agreement there might be backward movement on the question which appeared to be ripe for a final solution.

With a view to contributing to the success of the work on the question of non-production of chemical weapons in the commercial industry and in particular facilitating progress towards agreement on régimes for the

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

production of super-toxic lethal chemicals which do not possess a set of properties characteristic of chemical warfare agents, that is category 2 chemicals, we are presenting an additional proposal on the threshold for annual capacity above which facilities for the production of such chemicals are to be declared and subjected to systematic verification. The annual volume of production of each such chemical included into the list for this category would be set at 10 kilograms according to our proposal. The frequency and timing of systematic international inspection would be determined by the Consultative Committee taking into account the risk to the convention posed by a given chemical or facility.

The question of challenge on-site inspection undoubtedly deserves the special attention of the parties to the negotiations. The fact that there is no agreement on this essential element of the verification mechanism of a future convention hampers agreement on quite a number of other issues relating to a comprehensive and total chemical-weapons ban.

The Soviet Union, in the course of negotiations, has presented some ideas which, taking into account the position of other States, are aimed at bringing closer the positions of the parties to the negotiations. Progress towards a mutually acceptable agreement has also been facilitated by the proposals of the United Kingdom, Pakistan and the paper of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group, Ambassador Wisnoemoerti of Indonesia. The result has been that it has been possible for the first time to register some areas of convergence on the question of challenge inspections which are outlined in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, document CD/734. In particular, there is general agreement that the procedure for processing a challenge should ensure that inspections be carried out in the shortest time-frame.

It would be fair to say as well that the parties to the negotiations recognize that the locations and facilities to be subject to challenge inspections differ, and that that difference is based not on ownership of such locations and facilities but on their objective relevance to the scope of the convention. No one disagrees that in certain cases no refusal of an inspection to the full extent requested would be permitted -- for example, in the event of suspected use of chemical weapons and inspections of locations and facilities declared under the convention. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that there might be exceptional cases when the conduct of an inspection could jeopardize the supreme interests of a State party. In those cases, carefully considered means are required which, on the one hand, would ensure the integrity of the convention and confidence in compliance with it, and on the other hand would take into account the legitimate interests (political defence, economic, etc.) of a State party. It is our view that in this respect a good balance was struck in the British paper. We believe we should make maximum use as a basis for agreement of the idea of using alternative measures in cases where a State deems access of inspectors to the location unfeasible, an idea contained in that paper.

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

The Soviet delegation is in favour of an active search for mutually acceptable solutions on challenge inspections, and intends actively to participate in this process. We call on all parties to take the same course of reasonable compromise.

The current spring part of the Conference's session is to a large extent decisive for negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. The Soviet delegation will continue to work actively and consistently for overall progress in the negotiations, to seek mutually acceptable solutions and a speedy conclusion of a convention banning chemical weapons.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement. I now call on the representative of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Vejvoda.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): Comrade President, my delegation is deeply satisfied in welcoming you, the distinguished representative of revolutionary, socialist Cuba, to the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. The ties of friendship and close co-operation between our two countries will undoubtedly be extended to your Presidency, and you can count on the fullest support and assistance of my delegation in your effort to complete the establishment of a number of working bodies of the Conference and to start their practical work. We again congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Fan Guoxiang of China, who presided with success over our work in the opening month of this session.

My delegation joins those who expressed condolences to the delegation of Norway in connection with the passing away of the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Knut Frydenlund. Let me also express my personal sympathy to the delegation of Hungary in view of the untimely demise of the ambassador to Switzerland, Ambassador Komives. He was the first representative of his country in the Conference on Disarmament, actually at the time of the ENDC, and fulfilled his task here twice. We knew him as a dedicated representative of his country and an excellent colleague.

The agenda of this Conference contains a number of items related to nuclear disarmament as well as to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is thus only natural that participants in the Conference follow with keen interest the current bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space weapons between the Soviet Union and the United States. Developments at these negotiations have always found a certain echo in this room, especially if these developments were encouraging.

An important milestone in this regard was the Soviet-American meeting in Reykjavik in October of last year. A number of delegations, including my own, have already given their assessment of the results of that meeting. For us the basic criterion was that all positive elements which were achieved in Reykjavik should be maintained and developed further, instead of being reversed and forgotten.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

On 28 February the Soviet Union advanced proposals which built on the achievements of Reykjavik and at the same time create favourable conditions for further agreements to be achieved. The statement of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, contains a proposal to eliminate medium-range missiles in Europe and to conclude the relevant agreement separately from other issues. This proposal is based on the agreement reached in Reykjavik that the USSR and the United States eliminate all their medium-range missiles in Europe within the next five years. The remaining missiles of this class would be limited to 100 warheads on both sides. In the case of the Soviet Union these will be deployed in the Asian part of the territory, while the United States will have all its respective missiles deployed on its national territory.

The immediate impact of such an agreement and its implementation would be a substantial reduction of the danger of military confrontation in Europe and adjacent regions which Czechoslovakia, a country in the centre of Europe, welcomes most heartily. When NATO started the implementation of its 1979 decision on the deployment of Pershing-2 and cruise missiles in Western Europe the Government of Czechoslovakia, mindful of a qualitatively new, direct threat to its security, concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union on the stationing of longer-range theatre missiles on Czechoslovak territory. It was stressed then and repeated, that this measure was in reply to the NATO deployment and that if Pershing-2 and cruise missiles were removed from Europe, there would be no need for the longer-range theatre missiles to be maintained on Czechoslovak territory. It was a position of principle and in the statement of General Secretary Gorbachev it is clearly said that as soon as the agreement on the elimination of Soviet and American medium-range missiles in Europe is signed, the Soviet Union will withdraw from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, on the basis of agreement with the Governments of those countries, longer-range theatre missiles. In other words, once the threat which caused the stationing of these weapons is removed, there will be no need to keep them on the territory of the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia any longer.

The recent Soviet proposal has met with considerable interest and highly positive reactions from many countries. It is thus justified to hope that it could lead to some concrete, tangible results in the near future. Apart from improving the political climate in Europe, the elimination of medium-range missiles from that continent would represent an important sign of political will and readiness to engage in the process of nuclear disarmament and would give us realistic hope that the key problems of nuclear disarmament on the agenda of our Conference would finally be addressed in a constructive, business-like manner.

One of the essential prerequisites for the radical and definite solution of the problem of nuclear disarmament -- the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals -- is the willingness of States, especially those owning nuclear weapons, to address the problems of war and peace, of security of States in its complexity. And this complexity today is much deeper and wider than it was still some years ago. During the Second World War old, so to speak classical, concepts of military thinking still could be applied, when the issues of individual battles were decided mainly by one side's capability to

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

mobilize in certain regions at a certain time a prevailing quantity of armed forces and military hardware and by using them skilfully. But with the appearance of nuclear weapons this concept gradually became obsolete since huge nuclear stockpiles and their fast means of delivery will quickly transform any limited conflict into a world conflagration. In the final analysis, the Earth as a whole has become one military theatre and could be easily turned into a battlefield without any limitations. Rather, there would be one limitation -- all military operations would be carried on on the Earth or in the air, with all weapon systems being launched from the Earth or from the air.

But from the beginning of the 1980s we have witnessed an effort to remove even this last limitation. Any attempt to bring the arms race into outer space, to deploy weapons there, irrespective of whether we fix on them a defensive or offensive label, would represent a qualitatively new threat against the Earth.

During our last two plenary meetings an exchange of views developed with respect to directed-energy weapons and their possible use in space and from space against the Earth. Ambassador Hansen of the United States tried to explain that, for example, laser weapons could only be used beyond atmosphere, against ballistic missiles during their trajectory through space. Ambassador Nazarkin then drew our attention to the fact that lasers could already now be used in outer space also for offence against other objects, e.g. early-warning satellites, and that with sufficient concentration of energy they could also penetrate, to some extent, through the atmosphere and attack aircraft, for example, in its upper layers. Even Ambassador Hansen then agreed that lasers could drill through atmosphere, even if he preferred the upward drill. In connection with this exchange my delegation would like to stress just one more aspect. What was discussed were more or less existing or near possibilities of lasers. But what is going to happen 20 to 30 years from now, once weapons have been permanently installed in outer space? We are confident that the present arguments about how lasers cannot penetrate through the atmosphere will seem, to future analysts, rather obsolete, if not ridiculous. And we should not forget that directed-energy weapons represent only one form of possible weapons to be installed in outer space. Already now various other types are mentioned, and it might be safely presumed that several decades from now, if human civilization survives, a whole panoply of strike space weapons could be developed. And it is now for us a high-priority task to stop the penetration of weapons into outer space, and to make it impossible to develop new and highly destructive space weapons.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Czechoslovakia for his statement and the kind words addressed to my country and to myself. Ambassador Vejvoda has just made reference to the sad demise of Ambassador Imre Komives of Hungary, who was during two different sessions the representative of his country in this negotiating body, Chairman of the then Committee on Disarmament and also of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Radiological Weapons. He served with distinction the multilateral disarmament negotiating body and was an outstanding representative of his country, Hungary. He was also the friend of many of us here. I personally remember him with great respect as we were companions during my first tour of duty in

(The President)

Geneva. May I, on behalf of the Conference, transmit our deep condolences to the delegation of Hungary and to the family of Ambassador Komives. I now call on the distinguished representative of Australia, Ambassador Butler.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Mr. President, I welcome you to the Chair of this Conference for the month of March and heartily express the willingness of my delegation to co-operate with you fully as you preside over this important Conference.

Last month we made splendid progress and for this we are deeply indebted to your predecessor, Ambassador Fan Guoxiang of the People's Republic of China.

In the statement I made on the opening day of the Conference I said that Australia had great hopes for the Conference in 1987. I also said that one of the reasons for our optimism was that the opening month of the Conference would be in Ambassador Fan's hands. Our optimism has already been justified and the reasons for it were more than fulfilled, and we thank Ambassador Fan for this.

The wisest and most experienced amongst us, Ambassador García Robles of Mexico, pointed out on an informal occasion last week that if one looks at our agenda and sets to one side the final item, that of the drafting of our report, one is left with eight other substantive items. In his remarks he noted that if agreement were reached on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and other arrangements for specific handling of two other items were agreed to, then there would remain only one item on which enabling action was required, and then we would be at work on all items.

Last week the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space was established, and today, I understand, we will appoint the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Aldo Pugliese of Italy.

I think it is also true that the specific arrangements for items 2 and 3 of our agenda are in train.

So, as is usual, Ambassador García Robles' analysis of the situation is correct. Putting it simply, we are under way for 1987 and the deck has been cleared for agreement on getting work started under that last item, in fact the first item of our agenda -- nuclear test ban. And this item is the subject of my statement today.

This truly gratifying set of developments rests, I believe, on the active influence within our Conference during these opening weeks of a word, a concept, which has been on everyone's lips -- convergence. On the very first day of our Conference, on 3 February, this concept, this phenomenon and its desirability, was referred to frequently. Since then we have seen it applied in action with excellent results. I believe it can serve us well now with regard to item 1 of our agenda, an item to which every delegation in this room attaches undoubted priority importance.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

To demonstrate this point I would like briefly to remind the Conference of some of the statements that have already been made on item 1. I hasten to say, as all will appreciate, that making a choice between various statements is always a difficult business. So I want this to be clear.

The only motive I have had in making the following choices is to give fair evidence of the existence of convergence with respect to item 1 of our agenda.

On 3 February, in the first statement made at this year's session of the Conference, Ambassador García Robles said this:

"The need this year, (is) to establish without further delay an ad hoc committee with the objective of ... carrying out the multilateral negotiations of a treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear test explosions."

On the same day the Chairperson of the Swedish delegation, Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin, said:

"It is time for the convergence in the General Assembly to be translated by us into a mandate for an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban ... it is time for the Conference on Disarmament to start practical work on its first agenda item. All relevant matters should be addressed: scope and content, as well as compliance and verification."

On 26 February, the leader of the Soviet delegation, Ambassador Nazarkin said:

"It is necessary to begin without delay practical work on nuclear test ban in the Conference on Disarmament and to establish an ad hoc committee for this purpose."

A statement of very great significance was made by the leader of the United States delegation, Ambassador Hansen, on 24 February. He said:

"This Conference can neither replace nor duplicate the delicate work which is just getting under way bilaterally. Nevertheless, this Conference can usefully consider and work on a number of nuclear testing issues, including compliance and verification issues essential to any future accord. The Conference on Disarmament can make contributions on these and other test ban issues of particular importance."

These statements demonstrate convergence that is clear, but it would be misleading to gloss over differences of view that have also been expressed.

For example, on 26 February the leader of the delegation of India, Ambassador Teja, expressed reservations about the establishment of an ad hoc committee unless it had a negotiating mandate, and was directed specifically to nuclear-weapon tests.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Ambassador Teja said that unless this approach were taken we might "create the illusion of movement without any real movement and arouse false hopes that the Conference on Disarmament had broken new ground when nothing of that sort may in fact have happened".

He said that if his approach were accepted "we would at least know the future direction in which we are moving even though the road may be sometimes hard and difficult. To do otherwise would mean obscuring our vision and getting lost among the footpaths of side-issues, without reaching the principal destination".

This concept of the "principal destination" is of course the central one, and it is here that I believe we also are witnessing convergence.

For example, I return to Ambassador Hansen's statement, which designated specifically that "the ultimate objective is that of banning nuclear tests". By the way, not nuclear-weapon tests, nuclear tests, all tests. He went on: "The United States seeks to engage in a process which will result in practical and realistic steps in the area of nuclear testing".

He went on to state the United States view of what it sees to be certain key relationships, such as between cuts in nuclear weapons, improved verification capabilities and what the United States calls (and others may not agree) the long-term objective of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty.

With all respect to my Indian friend and colleague, I cannot agree that to start practical work now would in any way sidetrack us from the real issue, what he himself has called the principal destination -- how could it? He says his Government is committed to that destination, although possibly qualified by the Indian use of the term weapons testing. Nevertheless that principal destination is one to which he says, and all of us around this table say, we are committed.

We all know, as the Indian Ambassador has pointed out, that the way ahead is difficult and that there are areas of disagreement but to say as he does, that because of these difficulties we should not even start our work, is a logic my delegation cannot support.

Our concern is that while bilateral discussions continue between the major nuclear-weapon States both on nuclear-weapon reductions and on the issue of reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear testing, this vital body, our Conference, should deny itself the role and influence it can and must have on these issues: we should not deny ourselves that role.

Both super-Powers in their recent statements on this subject have allowed and admitted that role and that influence to this Conference. They have both endorsed it.

We all often stress the urgency and importance of this Conference playing its proper role especially on the nuclear-testing issue. We can do it.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Convergence is at hand. The gaps between us are in fact small, as I hope the citations I have made have indicated, we should act now.

This practical, sober and realistic approach, if I may be allowed to say so, was probably put most clearly, indeed I thought it was put brilliantly, by the leader of the Japanese delegation, Ambassador Yamada, in his statement of 10 February.

He emphasized the existence of common purpose and perception on the nuclear-testing issue which had been revealed at the last General Assembly and is now evident in this Conference.

He said: "There is common perception of the subject matter of the work. There is recognition of the importance of verification and willingness to participate in its implementation. Now is the chance to resume substantial work on a CTB".

With regard to the mandate language having reviewed the existing drafts and relevant recent resolutions of the General Assembly, he noted "that there can be much in common" between the words "with a view to the negotiation of a treaty" on the one hand and the words "with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a treaty".

Above all, he said these words and they are words with which my delegation heartily agrees:

"It must be possible for us to proceed in a spirit of co-operation to establish an ad hoc committee with an appropriate mandate to commence substantial work on a comprehensive test-ban treaty at the beginning of this session. Indeed, it would be our collective responsibility to do so."

In conclusion, one of my Government's abiding concerns is the question of where would we be, in the pursuit of this vital objective of an end to all nuclear testing, if we failed again this year to have this Conference play its proper role? Why should we sit and let time pass when other relevant negotiations are taking place, when we have a role to play in assisting negotiations? What would we say to ourselves if the time came, next year or the year after, when the States possessing nuclear weapons or conducting nuclear tests said "We are ready, we have got a treaty, where are the means of verification, how can we put this into action, what has the Conference on Disarmament done?"; and the answer is, "We have sat on our hands, we have not done the work, we were waiting". Our Australian concern is that we do this work now so that when the treaty required to bring about an end to all nuclear testing by all States in all environments for all time is ready and open for signature and implementation, we are there with the technical means, the means of verification, to bring that treaty into action, and not have to say "We sat on our hands for five years, give us another three or four years while we work out what you need to make that treaty come into force." That work can be done now. With the current convergences we should be able to agree, as Ambassador Yamada has said, to an appropriate mandate to start that work now.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

Technical aspects of it are under way, in the view of the scientific experts -- they are meeting now. We have proposed in Working Paper CD/717 that this Conference should decide to establish a global seismological network: the elements, the bones, the fabric of it are already there, but we have proposed putting it into place now, so that when the treaty is ready either through this Conference, through bilateral negotiation, or a combination of both, that network will be in operation and thus the treaty will be in operation on the earliest possible day. We are not alone -- others have made proposals, some similar, some complementary. The materials we require are at hand. Convergence is with us and I appeal to this Conference to bring to a conclusion, without further delay, a decision on the establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of our agenda.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I have no more speakers on my list for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Meiszter.

Mr. MEISZTER (Hungary): Mr. President, allow me to thank you and those who expressed words of sympathy and condolence on the occasion of the untimely demise of my compatriot, the late Ambassador Imre Komives, who served with devotion the same cause we are striving for. My delegation will convey their words to the Hungarian Government and to the grieving family of Ambassador Imre Komives.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As announced at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I shall now suspend the meeting and convene in five minutes' time an informal meeting of the Conference in order to consider the various requests from non-member States to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established under agenda item 5. I also wish to announce that the consultations on the appointment of the Chairman of that Ad Hoc Committee have come to a successful conclusion, and when we resume the plenary we can formalize the appointment of its Chairman.

The plenary meeting was suspended at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The 394th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

As a consequence of the results of the informal meeting we have just held, the Conference will proceed to consider the requests from non-member States to participate in the Committee established under agenda item 5, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. In accordance with the practice established by my predecessor during the month of February, I suggest that we consider the requests together, as there have been no objections to Working Papers CD/WP.269 to 279, containing the draft decisions on the participation of Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Portugal, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Austria, Denmark, Greece, Spain and Senegal. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the draft decisions.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I now wish to refer to the question of the appointment of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The consensus we have reached is to appoint Ambassador Aldo Pugliese of Italy as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. I shall therefore take it that the Conference agrees to that appointment.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I should like to congratulate Ambassadors Pugliese, on behalf of all members of the Conference as well as myself, on the appointment on which we have just decided. Naturally, I wish him every success in his important duties, which I am sure he will carry out efficiently, given his well-known diplomatic ability. I give the floor to Ambassador Pugliese.

Mr. PUGLIESE (Italy): Mr. President, I would simply like to thank you and, through you, to express my gratitude to all the distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament for the confidence they have placed in the Italian delegation by agreeing that I should serve as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee that will be dealing with the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The secretariat has today circulated at my request a timetable of meetings for the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for next week. As usual, the timetable has been prepared in consultation with the Chairmen of the various Ad Hoc Committees; it is tentative and may be altered if necessary. In this connection, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee under agenda item 5, Ambassador Pugliese, will begin consultations on the most suitable date for the subsidiary body to begin its work. Once he has completed his consultations, the timetable will be revised and circulated once again if the Committee is to meet next week. If there is no objection I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I now intend to adjourn the plenary meeting if no other member wishes to take the floor. The next plenary meeting on the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 10 March, at 10 a.m. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.