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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 5 February 1980, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. D.S. McPhail

(Canada)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria:

Argentina:

Mr. A. DUMONT
Miss N. FREYRE PENABAD

Australia:

Sir James PLIMSOLL
Mr. A. BEHM
Ms. M. WICKES

Belgium:

Mr. A. ONKELINX
Mr. J-M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil:

Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA
Mr. S. DE QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. P. VOUTOV
Mr. I. SOTIROV
Mr. P. POPTCHEV
Mr. K. PRAMOV

Burma:

U SAW HLAING
U NGWE WIN

Canada:

Mr. D.S. McPHAIL
Mr. G.A.H. PEARSON

China:

Mr. YANG HU-SHAN
Mr. LUO REN-SHI
Mr. PAN ZHEN-QIANG
Mrs. GE YU-YUN

Cuba: Mrs. V. BOROWDOSKY JACKIEWICH
Mr. L.A. BARRERAS CAÑIZO
Mr. A. JIMÉNEZ GONZÁLEZ

Czechoslovakia: Mr. M. RUZEK^{OV}
Mr. P. LUKES^V
Mr. E. ZÁPOTOCKÝ
Mr. J. JIRUSEK^{OV}

Egypt: Mr. M. EL-BARADEI
Mr. N. FAHMY

Ethiopia: Mr. F. YOHANNES

France: Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic: Mr. J. ZENKER
Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI

Germany, Federal Republic of: Mr. G. PFEIFFER
Mr. N. KLINGLER

Hungary: Mr. I. KÓMIVES
Mr. C. GYÓRFFY
Mr. A. LAKATOS

India: Mr. C.R. GHAREKHAN

Indonesia: Mr. S. DARUSMAN
Mr. I.M. DAMANIK

Iran: Mr. D. AMERI

Italy: Mr. V. CARDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO
Mr. C. TALIANI
Mr. M. MORENO
Mr. C. FRATESCHI
Mr. F. DE LUCA

Japan: Mr. Y. OKAWA
Mr. T. NONOYAMA
Mr. T. IWANAMI
Mr. K. MIYATA

Kenya: Mr. S. SHITEMI
Mr. G.N. MUNIU

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCÍA ROBLES
Mr. M.A. CÁ CERES
Miss L.M. GARCIA

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. L. BAYART

Morocco: Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. R.H. FEIN
Mr. H. WAGENMAKERS

Nigeria: Mr. T.O. OLUMOKO
Mr. T. AGUIYI-IRONS I

Pakistan: Mr. A.A. HASHMI

Peru: Mr. F.V. BELAÚNDE
Mr. A. DE SOTO
Mr. J. AURICH MONTERO

Poland: Mr. B. SUJKA
Mr. H. PAĆ
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. S. KONIK

Romania: Mr. C. ENE
Mr. V. TUDOR
Mr. T. MELESCANU

Sri Lanka: Mr. I.B. FONSEKA

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. B. SKALA
Mr. L. NORBERG
Mr. S. STRÖMBÄCK
Mr. S. ERICSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V. L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. Y. K. NAZARKIN
Mr. V. I. USTINOV
Mr. M. P. SHELEPIN
Mr. A. I. TIOURENKOV
Mr. Y. P. KLIUKIN
Mr. E. D. ZAITSEV
Mr. E. K. POTYARKIN

United Kingdom:

Mr. D. M. SUMMERHAYES
Mr. N. H. MARSHALL
Mr. P. M. W. FRANCIS

United States of America:

Mr. A. S. FISHER
Mr. A. AKALOVSKY
Mr. M. DALEY
Mr. M. SANCHES
Mr. P. SALGADO
Mr. J. CALVERT

Venezuela:

Mr. A. R. TAYLHARDAT
Mrs. R. M. DE ADAMES

Yugoslavia:

Mr. D. DJOKIC

Zaire:

Mr. KALONJI TSHIKALA KAKWAKA

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

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Assistant-Secretary-General
for Disarmament:

Mr. J. MARTENSON

Sir JAMES PLIMSOLL (Australia): I would like to express my pleasure that China has taken its seat in this Committee and that it is represented at the beginning by a Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. I think it is very important for long-term disarmament negotiations and work that all five nuclear Powers should be represented here. China occupies a key position in the work because of its size, because of its history, and not least because it is a country which has nuclear weapons. If we are going to have basic long-term disarmament, key countries have to be associated with this discussion. They not only have to make a contribution to the working out of arrangements, but they have to accept responsibilities. Therefore the presence of China here gives, for the first time in recent years, a disarmament negotiating body which involves all the key countries.

Since we last met there have been developments which have not been to the advantage of disarmament. The international climate has deteriorated and in particular there has been the armed incursion into Afghanistan by Soviet forces, and their continued presence and operations in that country. The Australian Government has condemned this. The majority of countries in the United Nations General Assembly have shown their disapproval. But I am not going to discuss it here; there are other international forums where these things can be discussed. But it has to be noted realistically because it has led to developments that are not helpful to the work of this Committee.

In the first place, SALT has not come into force. When we were here last year, all of us here welcomed the SALT agreement. We had hoped that it would quickly come into force. We had hoped to build on it further measures of international disarmament and arms control. Now, for reasons which are very understandable, the United States has not for the time being proceeded with the ratification of that treaty. Unfortunately, the longer ratification is deferred the greater the obstacles will be for ratification, if only because in the meantime technical progress makes or could make some of the provisions of the agreement obsolete or no longer acceptable. So, that is one change for the worse in the world since we met here last -- the SALT agreement is not in force as we had hoped.

A second thing flowing from the event is the destabilizing effect in the sub-continent of India, in west Asia generally, and indeed in south-east Asia and other parts of Asia. It has had the effect of leading to increased armaments in those regions; and new defence preparations there have perhaps introduced new strains on relations among some of the countries of that region.

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

The third consequence, of course, and a more general one with a very real impact on our work, is the effect on the international climate of a deterioration in mutual confidence. Last year we were talking about confidence-building measures. Today we assemble when events have occurred which have had the opposite effect -- which have damaged confidence, which have made countries more suspicious of one another, suspicious of one another's intentions, more suspicious about one another's undertakings.

Now, this has an effect on the Committee. It makes things more difficult for us. But I think it has also made our work even more necessary and even more urgent. It has shown how fragile is the structure of peace. It has shown that we, in our work, have to take account of the fact that force is an element of perhaps more imminence than we had hoped. We must press on with all possible speed and do all in our power to control the most frightful of weapons and particularly nuclear weapons. That is the function and the duty of the Committee on Disarmament. There are forums and instrumentalities for discussing other aspects of international affairs, but on disarmament and on arms control we have a direct responsibility -- a very direct responsibility.

While it would be unrealistic for us here to pretend that nothing has happened to set back our hopes, and that nothing has happened to create new difficulties, it would at the same time be contrary to our duties and responsibilities not to apply ourselves to our utmost to measures of disarmament and arms control and make whatever progress we can. In that spirit, I shall approach the items that are going to be on our agenda and indicate in brief how the Australian Government looks at them today.

I shall take first "Disarmament and nuclear arms control", because that is the most dangerous area for mankind. It is the area where progress is most urgently needed. There are some significant facts for 1980. The first is that in February the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) will conclude. Its report will provide an important basis for the future development of international consensus on measures to enhance international trade and co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to strengthen restraints against the further spread of nuclear weapons. These reports are going to be of general international interest, but they will be of direct interest to the Committee on Disarmament and to our work at this session.

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

The second big fact of 1980 is that in August and overlapping into September there will be the NPT Review Conference. That is something to which the Australian Government attaches the utmost importance. We see that as one of the key events of 1980. We believe that it is quite vital to mankind that the international community should advance together to maintain, to develop, and to build on non-proliferation measures as far as nuclear weapons are concerned. There are now five nuclear-weapons States. That is enough. The more nuclear-weapons States there are, the more difficult it is going to be to assure responsible use of this tremendous potential for world-wide destruction. Five States are enough. We need, I think, by mutual consent to ensure that there are no more nuclear States, and, moving on from there, to ensure that those five themselves by agreement accept international rules and controls and later on internationally supervised controls and inspection measures for the reduction and dismantling of nuclear weapons. We in this Committee have to take account of the fact that this Conference is going to be held. We can make a contribution towards it. I shall come back to that in a few minutes.

But let me, in discussion of nuclear weapons, say something about the Comprehensive Test Ban. At the last session of the Committee, I gave great emphasis, on behalf of Australia, to achieving this ban. I said that one thing about it was that it was attainable. Many of the other disarmament and arms control measures before us are so complicated that we cannot expect quick results. Inspection is difficult, detection is difficult. But a Comprehensive Test Ban is attainable.

I welcome the fact that the three Powers -- the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union -- yesterday resumed talks on the CTB. That is something to be welcomed very much. I hope there will be an early agreement and that at least we will be given a more informative report than last time. I should like to associate myself with one of the remarks this morning by the Foreign Minister of Sweden, when he said that the Comprehensive Test Ban should not await or be dependent on ratification of SALT II. The Australian Government agrees completely with that. But in justice to the three negotiating Powers, none of them, as far as I know, has said anything that indicated or suggested that there is any link between SALT II and the CTB. We believe that the CTB is something that can and should be pursued in itself, irrespective of progress in SALT.

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

Now, what can the Committee on Disarmament do about the CTB? Some people have suggested that we should be drafting a treaty ourselves, without waiting for the three Powers. That seems to me to be quite unrealistic. We have to have -- the rest of us would have to have -- the participation of the three Powers. Some have suggested that the Committee itself, or a working group, or a group of experts, should prepare the heads of a treaty. That, I think, is more feasible, but it is hardly practicable without the participation of the three negotiating Powers.

Another possibility, and Australia put this forward as a suggestion at the last session of the Committee on Disarmament, would be that the Committee should start to work out, or at least consider, the institutional framework within which an international seismic detection system to monitor adherence to the CTB could operate. For example, should there be an independent international agency? What should be its reporting responsibilities? To whom should it look for instructions? To whom should it report? What should be the financial structure? These are questions which could be looked at by this Committee now. Any group which did that would have to take account of the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Seismic Experts and of the tripartite negotiations on the CTB. We want to avoid a situation where, after there is trilateral agreement on the CTB, there would be delay of one or two years because no work had been done on an institutional framework -- no work had been done on an international structure that would require the active participation and co-operation of many countries, not just the three nuclear Powers.

Here is where we look for guidance and a forthcoming lead from the three negotiating Powers. On the one hand, it is vital that the Committee on Disarmament should do nothing that would impede the trilateral negotiations. I take that as a fundamental point: we must not charge ahead enthusiastically into anything that is going to impede the three. Moreover, we must avoid in this Committee, as I have said on previous occasions, dividing on the lines of the nuclear Powers versus the rest of us. It must not be a question of "us" versus "them". This Committee has to work as a common entity in a common endeavour and we must not divide. We must actively avoid dividing.

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

But at the same time, we are entitled to ask from the three negotiating Powers some lead and some help in allowing us in the Committee as a whole to play a part. I think that the actual drafting of a treaty has to be ruled out. Is it possible to work out the heads of a treaty? If it is, the three negotiating Powers should put something before us in a way so that we can start work. If that is not possible, it should be possible to start work on the institutional framework that I have just referred to. If so, let them tell us. If that is not possible, is something else open for us? And so I ask the three negotiating Powers, who began work again yesterday, to look at where they have reached and to see where there is some area where they have agreement, or some area where they think that wider international discussion can be fruitful, and to let this Committee know where it can do some work at this stage and make a contribution as a partner. We want in this Committee as a whole to be partners with the three negotiating Powers. We are not trying to usurp their role. We are not trying to divide them or to render their task difficult. But surely there must be something at this stage in their discussion where, without prejudice to their eventual agreement, they could help us to set to work now.

As I have said, the NPT Review Conference will meet in August. It would be deplorable if, when that conference meets, it knows that there is no CTB, there is no preliminary outline of a CTB, and the Committee on Disarmament has done nothing at all on the treaty for a CTB and has done nothing on nuclear disarmament. That is not a desirable situation for this Committee to be in. It is not a desirable situation for the negotiating Powers to be in. It is not a desirable situation for the world community to be in. As we know, so many countries without nuclear weapons have been placing emphasis again and again on the fact that there is no progress outside the treaty on restraints on the nuclear Powers or on development of new nuclear weapons. As I said on a previous occasion, we in Australia, we do not regard that

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

as a reason why, at this stage, anybody who does not have them now should start developing nuclear weapons. But, all the same, we need to be able to show that something is being done. Recognizing the heavy responsibilities on the negotiating Powers, we welcome the fact that they have resumed negotiation. Nevertheless, I ask them to look seriously in the week ahead at whether they can refer something to this Committee.

Though the CTB is the most attainable measure at an early date, it is not the only question in the nuclear field that should concern us. I shall mention only one, and that is "cut-off", which is a shorthand term now for the "cessation of the production of fissionable material for nuclear-weapons purposes". This matter has been proposed for international consideration here and elsewhere in the past by Canada. It has been proposed and supported also by Australia. The United Nations General Assembly last year commended it to us for work on it. I think, realistically, agreement is not yet existing in the Committee on this to permit detailed work. But we in Australia want to keep the idea alive, to advance understanding on what is involved, and to pursue it as opportunity offers.

I shall turn now to chemical weapons, because this is an important question on which practical work can and should be pursued now. I do not think that in this year the CD is going to be able to reach a decision on chemical weapons, but in this year we can do useful, practical, and even some detailed work. I do not think that any of us, including the two negotiating Powers, is yet sufficiently aware of all that is involved for all the countries of the world. A lot has to be done first to establish what should be covered in a treaty, what are the essential requirements, and what are the limitations.

We all have a lot to learn from one another about chemical weapons and about the implications for peaceful industry. Sometimes in discussion it is assumed that the only persons who can make a contribution to this are those who are experts on chemical weapons. Indeed, there are only certain countries that have taken measures to acquire or prepare for chemical weapons. But there

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

are wider considerations than the weapons. There are also the considerations that relate to civil industry. It is something that concerns all of us in different ways, not only the highly developed countries but developing countries, because one of the reasons why chemical weapons present us with so many difficulties, greater difficulties than nuclear weapons, is that the civil and the military sides are so inextricably intermingled. Certain chemicals only become weapons when they are mixed together, and yet each of them individually might have civil uses and sometimes indeed when mixed together they might still have civil uses. This concerns the developing countries as well as the developed countries. After all, chemicals are part of the whole basis of plastics. We need to work out programmes that effectively place some limits and controls and rules on chemical weapons, but at the same time allow legitimate civilian industry. This is very difficult. We all in this have something to learn from one another: developed countries have something to learn from developing countries, and vice versa. The civilian sides of our community have something to learn from the military side, and vice versa. So we will have to do a lot of work on this. A lot of work can be done this year.

We shall need to consider, too, whether we should proceed by stages, for example whether we should have an initial treaty which is largely declaratory, to be followed in due course in a more comprehensive and detailed way. This has happened in some other forms of arms control and disarmament, where, over the years, there has been a gradual building up of restrictions and controls.

Australia could support a working group or group of experts or some other form of activity by this Committee in this field which would work on setting out the ground to be covered in a treaty and which would clarify some of the issues involved. I repeat, as I have said already this afternoon, I do not consider that a working group should itself begin this year to draft a treaty. But, of course, what it does would contribute to the drafting of the treaty.

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

Last year Australia proposed a sort of seminar on chemical weapons to contribute to our common understanding; and if some representatives do not like the word "seminar", we could perhaps call it an informal meeting of members of the Committee on Disarmament with chemical-weapons experts. The sort of things that could be examined would be: technical requirements for verification; the impact on the commercial chemical industry; chemical weapons and their characteristics; medical aspects of chemical weapons; and toxicity and toxicity criteria.

Those are the sorts of things that could be discussed very usefully in a factual way, analysing and exposing the issues in order to contribute to our work in this Committee. I understand that funds are available for this. Such a meeting, as I understand it, could be held at the end of February if all representatives are agreeable. If it were at the end of February, it could possibly be concurrent with discussions in the Committee on Disarmament on chemical weapons, when experts may be present in Geneva for other purposes at that time. But, if it cannot be held at the end of February, then I think it should be held during the next session, and a firm date should be set during this session. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, you might like to consult the representatives here individually and see whether sufficient preparedness exists to go ahead at the end of February or, if not, on what date.

I turn now to radiological weapons. This seems to me to be one matter on which action is possible this year, and which could be taken to finality this year. Radiological weapons do not yet exist, and therefore vested interests have not yet been created that could make prohibition more difficult. The weapons do not exist: but the prevention of the coming into existence of dangerous weapons is as much a matter of disarmament or arms control as taking action in regard to weapons that already exist. In this question we are in the fortunate position of having before us an outline of a treaty which was presented at the last session by the Soviet Union and the United States. We therefore have had five months to consider it, and our Governments have had five months to consider it. I would suggest that we should establish a working group to complete a draft of a treaty by the end of

(Sir James Plimsoll, Australia)

this session of the Committee on Disarmament, that is to say, before the end of April. That would be the first draft, and our Governments would then have two months to consider that draft. They would have a detailed text of a treaty in front of them, and when the Committee resumes for its second session this year, I hope it could then give further consideration and recommend a text to the General Assembly for adoption. At this time, more than ever, when the international climate has deteriorated and when we have bad elements to contend with, it is important for us to show that there is one element in disarmament that the Committee on Disarmament and the General Assembly can take definite action on. That would be a political act of great value, quite apart from the intrinsic value of getting a treaty on radiological weapons themselves.

The only other item on the agenda I shall mention is negative guarantees. I know that this is a matter to which a number of representatives here have attached considerable importance. We had very interesting discussions last year. Several countries have views, some of them conflicting, some of them not easily reconciled, but containing issues and fears and preoccupations which are very important to those countries and which are of wider importance to the international community as a whole. The Australian delegation will listen with interest to those representatives who have particular views to express at this session. I myself have some doubts as to whether a universal general solution is attainable at present, and whether a convention is possible just now. Perhaps regional arrangements, varying according to the situation, are possible. But these are things on which the Australian delegation will not take a dogmatic position. We shall listen and, where we can, be helpful. The Australian delegation will contribute to the discussion.

In conclusion, let me come back on the general theme that I expressed early on in my remarks this afternoon. Australia looks to constructive work in the Committee on Disarmament this year. Recent events have made things more difficult, but they have also made action on disarmament and arms control more urgent and more necessary.

Mr. OKAWA (Japan): Mr. Chairman, I would first like to express my deep appreciation for the warm words of welcome that you yourself extended to me, words that were kindly repeated by other speakers who have preceded me, on my assumption of the seat of the Japanese representative to the Committee on Disarmament. I assure you that I will participate in a constructive and straightforward manner in the work of the Committee, and pursue, together with my distinguished colleagues representing the other member States, our common objectives in the field of disarmament.

My delegation would like to congratulate you, Ambassador McPhail, on your assumption of the chair of our Committee for this month, and we would also wish to express our gratitude to Ambassador U. Saw Hlaing, the outgoing Chairman, for his important services to the Committee since last August. My delegation also wishes to extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency Vice Foreign Minister Mr. Zhang Wen-Jin, and the other members of the delegation of the People's Republic of China who have come to take part in the work of this Committee from this session. The delegations around this table, including my own, have long been looking forward to this event. And indeed the participation of China in the Committee is of epochal significance in the history of disarmament negotiations as we now have all the nuclear-weapon States gathered together in this room for the first time. My country hopes and expects that negotiations in the Committee will be greatly expedited by the constructive and concrete contributions to our work that I am sure we can expect from the Chinese delegation.

On the occasion of the beginning of the Second Disarmament Decade, I wish to reiterate Japan's unshakable resolve to pursue disarmament, and to state briefly our basic way of thinking in this field.

It was only a few months ago, at the thirty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly, that I stated the basic position of Japan: that in order to promote disarmament it is of outstanding importance that distrust among nations be eliminated. It is highly regrettable that a new situation has been created by the military intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, which, we can say without exaggeration, has fundamentally shaken mutual confidence among nations.

(Mr. Okawa, Japan)

The position of the Japanese Government on the situation in Afghanistan has been enunciated at home and abroad, and to reiterate that position here may not be in line with the aims of this Committee, entrusted as it is with sober but steady negotiations on disarmament. On the other hand, I would like to say one thing: I earnestly hope that the momentum for promoting disarmament which has been so painstakingly fostered in the international arena will not be irrevocably hampered by developments arising from the present international situation. We must all try to prevent this Committee from becoming a forum for exchanging accusations of an overly political nature, thus leading our deliberations on disarmament to a stalemate.

Japan has repeatedly maintained that, in the field of disarmament, nuclear disarmament is of the greatest urgency. My delegation considers that, in order to achieve nuclear disarmament, there is no other way than for the nuclear-weapon States to take realistic and concrete measures step by step, always bearing in mind that such measures must not adversely affect the existing regional and global frameworks for the maintenance of security. My country hopes to see as soon as possible the advent of an international situation in which the SALT II agreement, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in June last year, can be ratified. This would be the first step towards nuclear disarmament, inasmuch as the ratification and coming into effect of the SALT II agreement is indispensable for initiating the SALT III negotiations, which would presumably have as their objective a more substantial reduction of the strategic nuclear weapons of the two countries, as well as a curb on their qualitative development.

I wish to express the hope that, pending the entry into force of the SALT II agreement, both the United States and the Soviet Union will be refraining from any action which would be contrary to the letter and spirit of the SALT I interim agreement and the SALT II agreement, which would be in line with the views expressed by the United States Government on 4 January this year.

(Mr. Okawa, Japan)

Together with the bringing into effect of the SALT II agreement, it is really of extreme importance to work out a comprehensive test ban, which has been pending since 1963, as a new and concrete step towards arms control in the field of nuclear weapons. I particularly wish to urge the Committee that we should in this session place the topmost priority on conducting negotiations on the question of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. For this reason, I exhort once again the States participating in the trilateral CTB negotiations to expedite their negotiations towards their early conclusion.

In one month's time it will be exactly 10 years since the coming into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — the only global legal framework that we have for the prevention of nuclear proliferation. My country, which has continuously appealed for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime through, among other things, efforts at achieving universal participation in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, strongly hopes that this year's Second Review Conference of the parties to the Treaty will give new impetus to the promotion of nuclear disarmament, which has not made substantial progress during these last ten years. In this connexion, I wish to repeat our request that the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States submit to this Committee a detailed progress report on their trilateral CTB negotiations at the earliest possible opportunity, and in any event well in advance of the NPT Review Conference.

With regard to the field of non-nuclear disarmament, my delegation expresses the hope that this Committee will speedily start purposeful and concrete work, especially on a ban on chemical weapons.

All States are watching with high expectations the activities of this Committee, which has now entered its second year after reorganization. I would like to conclude my statement by stressing that, if it is to meet these expectations, the Committee should exert its utmost efforts to achieve realistic and concrete disarmament measures, such as a comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests and a ban on chemical weapons, to mention the most urgent.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): May I first of all extend greetings to you as Chairman of our Committee, the main body for multilateral negotiations on disarmament questions. The Soviet delegation expresses the hope that the wide experience you have gained in the public service and in taking part in the solution of important international questions will be very useful in the work of this Committee.

We also greet the new representatives in this room who are taking part in the work of the Committee for the first time.

The Soviet Union has always regarded the problem of limiting the arms race and of disarmament as the pivotal one in the complex of problems facing mankind. The Committee on Disarmament has an important place in the solution of this problem. As one of the initiators in setting up this body, the Soviet Union, during the entire period of the Committee's existence, has repeatedly presented for consideration by the Committee various proposals in the field of disarmament. Many of those proposals have resulted in concrete multilateral agreements which have blocked the arms race in certain directions.

Needless to say, the Soviet Union, together with other socialist countries, is pursuing the same course in the expanded Committee. We welcomed the participation in the Committee's work, as from 1979, of a new group of States, believing that this gives the work more weight and authority.

The year 1979 will hold a prominent place in disarmament negotiations. An outstanding event of the past year was the signing by the leaders of the USSR and the United States, on 19 June 1979 in Vienna, of the second Treaty on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (SALT II), after a period of long and intensive work. In the judgement of L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the bringing of this Treaty into effect would pave the way to major steps in the field of disarmament. The Committee on Disarmament evidently took the same view when it welcomed the signing of SALT II in the summer of 1979.

One can only regret in this connexion the fact that -- by no fault of the Soviet Union -- ratification of this important document is being delayed, and that the President of the United States has taken the decision to postpone ratification.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The successful completion in the summer 1979 of the Soviet-United States negotiations on the prohibition of radiological weapons met with a positive response from the international community. Some progress was achieved at the United Nations Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, in the bilateral Soviet-United States negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons and in some other negotiations.

Nor is it our wish to underestimate the useful work done by the Committee on Disarmament in 1979. There was a constructive exchange of views in the Committee on urgent questions of disarmament, and negotiations were begun on the question of guarantees of the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States. We hope not only that this work will be continued this year but that it will be conducted more concretely and effectively.

We do not of course regard the results achieved in the negotiations on disarmament in 1979 as meeting the vital requirements of the day. The arms race has not been reversed, it has not even been stopped. Its pace kept on increasing in 1979, while many bilateral and multilateral negotiations were marking time.

To bring about a radical change in this situation, the Soviet Union put forward last year a series of specific proposals on arms limitation and disarmament questions, including, above all, the new Soviet initiative on the problems of military détente and disarmament set forth in the speech made by L. I. Brezhnev in Berlin on 6 October 1979.

That speech contained the statement of our country's readiness to reduce the number of medium-range nuclear weapons deployed in the west of the Soviet Union from their present level, provided, of course, that no additional medium-range nuclear weapons are deployed in western Europe.

In an effort to get the attempts to achieve military détente in Europe out of the impasse in which they had been caught for years, and wishing to provide an example of proceeding from words to deeds, the USSR decided, by agreement with the other Warsaw Treaty Member States, unilaterally to reduce the number of Soviet troops in Central Europe, to withdraw up to 20,000 Soviet servicemen, a thousand tanks and also a certain amount of other military hardware from the territory of the German Democratic Republic in the course of 12 months.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

At the same time the Soviet Union spoke in favour of a further expansion of confidence-building measures in Europe.

The USSR expressed its willingness to reach an agreement to the effect that the prior notification of large-scale military exercises of ground forces, provided for in the Final Act of the All-European Conference, should be made more in advance, and not starting at the level of 25,000 men, as is the case now, but at a lower level, say 20,000 men. It is also prepared, on the basis of reciprocity, not to conduct military exercises involving more than 40-50 thousand men. The speech by L. I. Brezhnev contained other constructive proposals as well.

An extensive programme of disarmament measures was put forward at the meeting of the Committee of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Warsaw Treaty Member States on 5-6 December 1979.

The aim of this programme is to help towards lowering the level of the military confrontation and stopping the arms race in Europe, particularly in the field of medium-range nuclear missiles, and giving a powerful impetus towards the achievement of important agreements on military aspects of European security. The proposal of the socialist countries that the NATO States and the Warsaw Treaty States should not increase the number of participants in the two alliances was again confirmed. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the socialist countries emphasized their constant readiness to accept an immediate dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and to agree -- as a first step -- to eliminate their military organizations, starting from the mutual reduction of military activities.

Those present in this room are well aware of the proposals made by the Soviet delegation on various items of the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament. The same constructive position was also displayed by Soviet delegations at other negotiations on limiting the arms race and on disarmament, in particular at the tripartite negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, at the Vienna negotiations, etc. Quite a number of proposals on disarmament questions were also presented by other States, in particular by non-aligned States, in various international forums in 1979.

A situation had arisen in which all the objective conditions of progress in the disarmament negotiations in important directions seemed to be fulfilled. And yet it must be noted that the present session of the Committee on Disarmament opens

(Mr. Israelyan, USSR)

in a difficult international situation, in conditions in which the adversaries of détente are becoming more active, and the United States and other NATO-countries have set foot on the course of increasing military expenditures and carrying out new military programmes, of destroying the balance and bringing about a situation of military superiority for NATO. As a result, instead of conducting negotiations on the reduction of medium-range nuclear weapons, as proposed by the Soviet Union, the NATO bloc declared in December 1979 its decision to deploy about 600 new United States missiles in western Europe, trying to camouflage this decision by a proposal for negotiations -- but on their own conditions, from a position of strength. This decision has of course destroyed the basis for fair and honest negotiations on medium-range nuclear weapons. In these circumstances, only the revocation of the NATO decisions on the production and deployment of new United States missiles in western Europe or an actual suspension of their implementation -- on which an official decision should be taken -- would make it possible to begin effective negotiations on this question. Other decisions which seriously hamper progress in disarmament negotiations were also adopted.

All this, however, cannot deflect the Soviet Union from its steady pursuit of détente and disarmament. We look into the future with optimism. As L. I. Brezhnev recently emphasized: "We know that the will of the peoples has driven a way through all barriers for that positive movement in world affairs which is broadly described by the word 'détente'. This policy is deep-rooted. It is supported by powerful forces, and it has every chance of remaining the leading trend in relations between States."

The position of the Soviet delegation in the Committee on Disarmament in these circumstances -- and it is the position which our delegation has come to this session of the Committee to uphold -- is that we should continue the negotiations which were started in recent years on stopping the arms race, and promote the beginning of negotiations on other important aspects of disarmament. We intend in so doing to have regard to the recommendations of the General Assembly, including those of its thirty-fourth session which are addressed to the Committee on Disarmament directly.

The Soviet proposals to the Committee on Disarmament remain valid, and we believe that the need to consider them constructively and to carry them out is today even more urgent and acute.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Since the nuclear arms race is the greatest threat to peace, the USSR, jointly with other socialist countries, presented to the Committee on Disarmament in February 1979 specific proposals for conducting negotiations on nuclear disarmament with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States and of a certain number of non-nuclear-weapon States.

Unfortunately, these negotiations have not yet been started. The USSR delegation voices the hope that at the present session the Committee will arrange for the speedy commencement of preparatory consultations for the negotiations on nuclear disarmament and of the negotiations themselves. The Committee is called upon to accomplish this task by the resolution on "Nuclear weapons in all aspects" adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session.

An important aspect of nuclear disarmament is the question of the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, a question which the Soviet Union consistently advocates finding a solution for, and which is the subject of tripartite negotiations between the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom. The Soviet Union has taken a number of constructive steps with a view to speedily completing the negotiations and concluding a corresponding agreement. The Soviet Union is of the opinion that the speedy completion of work on the treaty and its entry into force would contribute to stopping the arms race and creating conditions for the transition to nuclear disarmament. The international community's interest in the progress of the negotiations is also reflected in the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. A contribution towards solving this important problem is also being made by the Committee on Disarmament and its Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events.

Among the questions of nuclear disarmament is that of the provision of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States. In his statement of 6 October 1979, L. I. Brezhnev reaffirmed once more that the Soviet Union will never use nuclear arms against those States that renounce the production and acquisition of such arms and do not have them on their territory.

The United Nations General Assembly gives much attention to this question, and the time has come to start producing an appropriate binding international agreement. At its thirty-fourth session also, the General Assembly called upon the Committee on Disarmament to speed up the elaboration of a draft international convention on the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Committee on Disarmament also faces important tasks in the field of the banning of other types of weapons of mass destruction.

At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted a resolution which urges the Committee to undertake, at the beginning of this session, negotiations on an agreement on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on the destruction of stocks. The current bilateral USSR-United States negotiations have made some progress. The Soviet Union stands ready to continue its active participation in the negotiations, by contributing in every way to the working out of an agreement on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

An important area of disarmament negotiations is the working out of an agreement on the prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. As far back as 1975, the Soviet Union came forward in the United Nations with an initiative aimed at preventing the realization of this terrible possibility. The General Assembly supported that proposal and recommended the Committee on Disarmament to undertake the preparation of an international agreement on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. Since that time this question has been repeatedly discussed in the Committee and at the sessions of the General Assembly.

A definite contribution towards the achievement of progress on this question was made by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session, when it requested the Committee on Disarmament to continue negotiations, with the assistance of qualified experts, with a view to preparing a draft comprehensive agreement on the prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction and, where necessary, draft agreements on particular types of such weapons. There were, of course, no votes against a General Assembly resolution containing such a request.

An indication of the possibility of solving the problem of the prohibition of new means of mass destruction may be found in the major elements of a treaty prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons, agreed upon in the bilateral Soviet-United States negotiations on the prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction and submitted to the Committee on Disarmament for its consideration.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The action taken by the General Assembly when, at its thirty-fourth session, it requested the Committee to continue negotiations on such a convention as soon as possible is undoubtedly of positive significance in this connexion. We believe that there is every possibility of an appropriate agreement being quickly prepared and signed on the basis of the major elements of a treaty prohibiting radiological weapons submitted to the Committee by the USSR and the United States.

The year 1980 will be packed with numerous conferences on disarmament problems. Two review conferences for already existing disarmament agreements are planned for this year: in March, for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; and in August-September, for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The second session of the Conference on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons will take place next autumn; and the Vienna negotiations and the tripartite negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear tests are proceeding. Various groups of experts will be working at one time or another throughout the year.

Among these numerous channels of negotiations on disarmament our Committee holds a special place. The Committee is the main body for multilateral disarmament negotiations, and all the nuclear Powers and States with the largest military potential participate in its work. Its agenda reflects a very broad spectrum of disarmament problems. That is why world public opinion will no doubt follow our work with the greatest attention. If we put our work on a constructive basis, applying the principle of non-detriment to the national-security interests of the sides, the Committee could set a good example to other disarmament forums.

The Soviet delegation for its part is ready to conduct businesslike negotiations and to co-operate with all delegations in carrying out the important tasks which the Committee has before it.

The Soviet delegation has listened attentively to the statements made at today's morning and afternoon meetings. A number of delegations touched upon questions which are outside the scope of the Committee's work. Some speakers tried to lay the blame for the worsening international situation on the Soviet Union and have grossly misinterpreted the Soviet position, thereby introducing a spirit of confrontation into the Committee's work at the very outset of its activities.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Soviet Union has, of course, its own views on contemporary international events, and the only reason why we did not touch upon those matters was that we wanted to get down as quickly as possible to the constructive work of the Committee. The statement by the Soviet delegation was made in precisely that spirit. In view, however, of the misinterpretations of the Soviet Union's position and the attacks on its policy that have been allowed to pass, we reserve the right, under rule 30 of the rules of procedure, to set forth in detail the Soviet views on the international situation at an early meeting of the Committee.

But on one delegation's statement, we should like to say a few words here and now.

The Soviet Union has always proceeded from the assumption that participation by the People's Republic of China together with other States in the discussion and decision of disarmament questions is desirable. In our opinion, some of those questions cannot be decided without the participation of all the nuclear Powers. This applies particularly to questions of nuclear disarmament, but not only to them.

At the same time, we already had serious doubts about the Chinese representatives' readiness to collaborate in working out concrete disarmament measures. Today, we are forced to note that the statement of the Chinese delegation gives no grounds for optimism. Although the Chinese representative said a lot about disarmament, the main features of his statement were its obstructive approach and its anti-Sovietism. Their purpose in adopting that approach is to block the way to a solution of the disarmament problem and secure for themselves unlimited possibilities for the unrestrained build-up of armaments. It is a question of providing their expansionist policy with a material base and ensuring sufficient forces for new attempts to teach sovereign States "a lesson" on the lines of the Chinese aggression last year against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Soviet delegation would like to make it clear, at the very beginning of our work, that we do not intend to allow such attacks on our country to go unnoticed. Whenever anyone who has a liking for fabrications such as these endeavours to use the Committee as a forum for suspect purposes, he will be met by a decisive rebuff on our part, but responsibility for this will lie with those who would like to complicate the business-like way in which this body conducts its meetings.

Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) (translated from French): The French delegation takes pleasure in resuming today, with its partners on the Committee, our important work in promoting disarmament. It is gratified to note that our Chairman is the representative of Canada, a country which has long had friendly ties with France and which has acquired many claims to the respect and gratitude of the international community through its valuable co-operation within multilateral organizations, and in particular through the active interest which it has long taken in the cause of disarmament.

Mr. Chairman, your authority and experience provide us with the assurance that our discussions will be conducted with the maximum efficiency. The French delegation extends to you its friendliest and sincerest wishes for the success of your efforts.

It is also pleased to see the People's Republic of China taking its place among us. The participation of this great country will make our Committee more fully representative of the international community. We welcome this presence, which we explicitly called for during the consultations that resulted in the establishment of the Committee, as we did that of the other nuclear Powers. We extend most friendly greetings to the Chinese delegation and look forward to its making a very useful contribution to our efforts.

I should also like to welcome our new colleagues, the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Hungary, Japan and Zaire. Nor should I like to omit addressing my delegation's thanks to our colleague from Burma, who preceded you in the chair and discharged that office with much distinction, not only at the end of our last session but also in the interval between our September meetings and the resumption of our work.

The circumstances in which we meet lend particular gravity to my statement today.

Only a short while ago, we could entertain the hope that the statements made at the opening of our second session would mainly convey feelings of optimism and confidence in the progress of our work and the determination of each one of us to contribute fully to the joint endeavour. We hoped that those statements might reflect the relative calm which, despite difficulties and differences of opinion, we experienced at our first session.

(Mr. de la Gorco, France)

Today, unfortunately, our thoughts -- at least those of many of us -- are dominated by acute concern. The events in Afghanistan have profoundly affected the international situation and the prospects it could offer.

I should like to recall here the position of the French Government, as expressed in the statement which it issued on 9 January:

"The events which have occurred in Afghanistan are at variance with the fundamental principles that govern international life and France's policy ...

"These events have dealt a blow to the policy of détente, to which France is sincerely but not unconditionally attached.

"For its part, France does not intend to abandon efforts to bring about détente, which is of mutual interest, and the alternative to which is a return to the cold war. It considers it essential, however, that the trust necessary to the pursuit of détente should be re-established by positive gestures, particularly as regards the right of the Afghan people to determine its own future."

The present crisis has not only seriously undermined security and confidence, but is also tending to affect the relationship of forces and the balances of power. It is already leading to an increase in military resources and may give fresh impetus to the arms race.

Public opinion, the man in the street, have clearly understood the point, and we have all gathered evidence of scepticism and discouragement in recent days: what could be done for disarmament now?

Nevertheless, the French Government, while bound to note that the task has now been made more difficult, does not intend to draw such negative conclusions from the present situation. There are two reasons for this. The first is that we have here a mandate from the international community, and we must stick to that mandate in spite of the adverse circumstances. The second is that the very dangers arising from the present situation make it all the more urgent to discharge that mandate. They should prompt us to redouble our efforts to find ways of strengthening security and confidence. In this connexion, tensions and crises emphasize still further the need for negotiations to bring about a reduction in arms.

In order to carry out our mandate and meet the expectations of the international community, and in the interests of peace, we must therefore resume our discussions and initiate negotiations -- where they appear to be possible -- on the major issues with which we dealt last year. In so doing, however, we must display increased vigilance and be more exacting regarding the conditions which

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must form the basis of confidence and security in future agreements. While we do not intend to abandon our efforts, we cannot be unaware of the fact that their success will depend on the political climate and that, when we reach the concluding stage, each will have to weigh his decision in the light of his security requirements and the degree of trust prevailing.

At its most recent session, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the next 10 years the "Second Disarmament Decade". Our future work will be set in this time frame. The complexity of the problems to be resolved, whether political or technical, will require prolonged efforts. Ten years is not too much for completing a major phase in the disarmament effort, and it is with a period of this order in mind that I should like briefly to refer to the prospects for our endeavour and the problems attaching to it, in the light of world developments and the lessons of experience, principally that of the first Decade's failure.

First of all, there has been a transformation in the international community. States are daily more conscious of the urgent need to ensure their right to security. They are increasingly insistent in their demand for an equal right to express their views on matters affecting their interests. This is also true of disarmament, which concerns everybody. Such is the spirit which imbues the institutions that emerged from the tenth special session of the General Assembly, including our Committee. The multilateral negotiations which it is the Committee's business to conduct cannot, as a matter of principle, be subordinated to bilateral undertakings and pledged to endorsing their results. It is our hope that, from this session on, the Committee will be able to act in accordance with the role which the international community acknowledges it to possess and with the requirements resulting from the international community's development.

The nuclear issue continues and will long continue to be marked by the overwhelming supremacy of the two major Powers. Through SALT, they have made not uncommendable efforts to set bounds to their arms race and to technological breakthroughs. Nuclear disarmament properly speaking remains their particular responsibility for as long as the disproportion between their arsenals and those of the other nuclear Powers continues to be of the same magnitude.

There is an aspect of the nuclear problem which is peculiar to the area of the world in which France is situated. In that area, nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence have long constituted an essential factor of balance, and hence of security. The reduction of nuclear weapons in that area can only result from a specific process involving, first, the nuclear arsenals of the two major Powers, for there is no European nuclear theatre which can be separated or isolated from the global balance.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

Whatever the obsession with nuclear weapons, we note that the all too numerous conflicts of the last 30 years have in each case been waged with conventional weapons. The issues raised by such weapons do not appear on the agenda of our Committee. They will have to be the subject of studies and, subsequently, appropriate negotiations, normally conducted within a regional framework and under the responsibility of the countries belonging to the regions concerned. We would, however, consider it desirable for the Committee, at the appropriate time, to examine the principles, conditions and methods applicable to regional disarmament endeavours. I would recall that a number of initiatives have been taken in connexion with the reduction of conventional weapons in Europe. The French Government, for its part, has proposed the convening of a conference on the subject. Active consultations are currently in progress regarding this proposal, which was announced from the rostrum of the United Nations by the President of the French Republic.

The experience of recent conflicts and that of crisis situations underline the vital importance of verification and confidence-building measures. As regards verification, we hope that the Second Decade will witness the adoption and gradual implementation of the proposal for an international satellite monitoring agency. As to confidence-building measures, the French Government accords them a prominent position in its proposals aimed at the convening of a conference on disarmament in Europe. It emphasizes that, in order to be fully effective and pave the way for disarmament, confidence-building measures must be truly significant and binding.

Still within the perspective of the Second Decade, I should like to reiterate the importance which the French Government attaches to the link between the disarmament effort and the development effort. The French Government hopes that the next stages in the disarmament process will release resources which can be used to further the economic and social development of the less advantaged countries and, to this end, it has submitted proposals which are currently under study.

Lastly, the French delegation wishes to mention the assistance with which science can provide the disarmament effort during the next decade. Long enlisted in the service of military equipment, science can also contribute to arms reduction and control, particularly through the refinement of verification techniques. In order to promote the study of this problem, the French Government has decided to organize a symposium on the subject of "Science and disarmament".

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The work awaiting us here this year must of course be seen in terms of the Second Decade. In the days to come we shall be discussing our agenda and our programme of work. The French delegation, for its part, is inclined to put the items which we agreed to consider last year on the agenda again. This solution would be consistent with the conclusions of the report on the first session, although of course these questions do not all hold out the same prospects for discussion, since they are not all equally ripe for consideration and do not all afford equal opportunities for progress.

Two of them are unquestionably matters for negotiation: radiological weapons and chemical weapons.

Regarding radiological weapons, we have a text which has been submitted to the Committee by the United States and the USSR. Negotiations should be initiated on this text, preferably within a working group. We intend to present comments and proposals.

Chemical weapons should certainly constitute the principal object of our work at the present stage. The question of chemical disarmament is, at least potentially, of direct interest for a large number of States. Chemical weapons are within the reach of many States, and their formidable effectiveness might therefore tempt countries which do not possess such weapons to acquire them. This should prompt us not only to prohibit the use of such weapons -- a prohibition of this kind is already embodied in the Geneva Protocol -- but to banish them totally from all arsenals.

Such is the object of the bilateral negotiations being conducted by the United States and the Soviet Union. These negotiations are designed to result in a commitment of universal scope. Aims of this kind are the very basis for the competence of our Committee, which has a right and a duty to hold a thorough discussion on a question of concern to the international community as a whole and to negotiate on all its aspects. We have before us a substantial amount of documentation: draft treaties, numerous contributions from member States and the latest report of the negotiating Powers.

Last year our discussions reached a point where they took an interesting and positive turn and were conducted on two levels: on the one hand, the Committee considered substantive issues with the aim of arriving at a clearer understanding of individual positions and consequently at an assessment of the points of agreement and disagreement; on the other hand, it examined the outlines of a

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future convention. These discussions could only be tentative, but they could constitute the preliminary phase of negotiations. We sincerely hope that the entire matter will be considered without delay in a working group, and that discussions can be initiated on substantive issues, in keeping with the Committee's role as a negotiating body.

We shall of course be ready to conduct appropriate discussions -- if need be, within working groups -- concerning the other items of our future agenda. In every instance, the French delegation will give an extremely frank and comprehensive statement of its views and will do its utmost to contribute to the search for solutions.

World opinion, whose concern in the present circumstances is well known to all of us, must find grounds for hope in the work of our Committee. For this reason, the French Government is more than ever persuaded of the need to enter into genuine negotiations at this session. Only if that is done, moreover, can the Committee show itself to be performing its appointed role. If we spent our time in exchanges of views, academic debates or, still worse, procedural discussions, we would seriously disappoint the expectations of the international community.

We must not forget that the preparations for the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament will begin next year. It would be deplorable if, at that time, the Committee's record were found to be unsatisfactory. Such a failure, in the vital area of negotiation, would be seen as the failure of the system established in 1978, as the stalling of the movement launched in that year by the General Assembly. The result would be justifiable disappointment and bitterness. We must make every effort to avoid such an outcome and justify the hopes which still exist.

All of us, but more especially the major Powers, have a responsibility to make multilateral disarmament a credible endeavour, conducted on the basis of equal rights and within a body representative of the international community as a whole. Should we fail to do so, scepticism, not to say cynicism, will merge with heightened feelings of insecurity to contribute to a resumption of the arms race, the multiplication of crises and aggravation of the risks of conflict.

We want, however, to remain confident and to believe that the devotion of the peoples to peace and détente, and the perception of the dangers incurred by mankind, will instil in us the necessary determination to conduct the joint enterprise of disarmament in this Committee, with the participation of all.

Mr. SUJKA (Poland): Mr. Chairman, I should like to take this opportunity to associate my delegation with the congratulations and good wishes which previous speakers have expressed to you on your assumption of the important and demanding post of our Chairman for the month. At the same time, in welcoming you as the new head of the delegation of Canada, I want to assure you that we look forward to continuing with you in the spirit of good will the friendly and useful co-operation which we enjoyed with your predecessor, Ambassador Harry Jay. At the same time, I would like to express to our previous Chairman, the distinguished representative of Burma, our appreciation for the skilful and wise leadership he gave to our Committee at the end of our session last year.

I am also happy to avail myself of this occasion to place on record our cordial welcome to all representatives seated at this conference table, particularly those who lead their respective delegations for the first time -- the distinguished representatives of Algeria, Belgium, China, Hungary, Japan and Zaire.

My best greetings go also to Ambassador Jaipal, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General and Secretary of our Committee and to all members of his staff. I am also pleased to see among us Mr. Jan Martenson, the Assistant-Secretary-General and new Chief of the United Nations Centre for Disarmament. My delegation finds with a sense of satisfaction the fact that this multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, in accordance with the agreement reached during the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is at last a meeting with all its forty members present. We would wish to hope that, from now on, all the permanent members of the Security Council, who also happen to be nuclear-weapon Powers, will live up to their obligations under the Charter and make an equal and constructive contribution to our common endeavours in the field of disarmament. Their presence at this negotiating table should now lead to the early elaboration of disarmament agreements of universal scope which the international community closely identifies with the interests of world peace and security.

Before I proceed to the main subject of my statement, that is the position of the Polish delegation with respect to the tasks facing us in the Committee in the course of 1980, I must register my total surprise to hear that some speakers, most notably the leader of the delegation of the People's Republic of China, whom, a short while ago I had the honour to welcome as a new member of our negotiating organ, deemed it appropriate to include in their opening statements today matters which are

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obviously not within the scope of the Committee's mandate. In this connexion, I find it necessary to recall with due emphasis that the Committee on Disarmament has been explicitly conceived as a negotiating body, not a deliberative one. As such, it was given a very precise mandate to deal with negotiations pertaining to the cessation of the arms race and disarmament. My delegation has been under the impression that this fact implies an obligation recognized by all to observe and follow certain basic ground rules of behaviour, rules based, not so much on the relevant and well-known documents and long tradition, but rather on a gentlemen's agreement to refrain from raising in the Committee issues which are manifestly not relevant to its precise terms of reference. The Polish delegation had hoped that these rules would be inviolably respected in the interests of a constructive and friendly atmosphere in this conference room, in the overriding interests of disarmament. It was therefore with a sense of disappointment that we heard a new member, China, and some other delegations, disagree with or go back on our gentlemen's agreement.

My delegation has not come to this Committee with the intention to engage in a discussion on extraneous matters beyond the scope of the Committee's mandate. However, under the circumstances, we would be remiss not to present our point of view with regard to what some speakers called "severe threat to détente" or "set-back to détente". While we are not the fire brigade, when we hear that Rome burns we would just like to be clear where the fire comes from. We therefore wish to reserve our right to take the floor again at an appropriate time to comment on some of the statements made. Having said this, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn to my prepared statement, on the position which my Government takes with respect to the problems which are within the scope of the mandate of this organ.

As the Committee inaugurates its 1980 session, the Polish delegation deems it appropriate to make known its views and comments on some of the issues, both substantive and organizational, which the Committee will have to resolve in the interest of expeditious, orderly and productive work which the international community expects of this organ.

In principle, my delegation is of the opinion that the Committee on Disarmament should start its work in 1980 where we left off at the end of the session in 1979. In practical terms, this would mean that we must reopen and continue in a sustained way our efforts with respect to all the substantive agenda items which kept us busy throughout 1979 but which still are far from completion.

(Mr. Sujka, Poland)

As we all know, their list includes, in the nuclear field, the questions of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and disarmament, a nuclear-test ban and the problem of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Then we have the question of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons and this includes radiological weapons. Finally, there is the pressing problem of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Surely, in resolving our agenda for 1980 and our work programme for the first part of our session this year, we must also take due account of the recommendations contained in some of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. This concerns, in the first place, the question of a comprehensive disarmament programme.

While the Polish delegation does not anticipate any major difficulty in reaching a consensus on the agenda of the Committee, the question of elaborating a realistic and logical programme of work for the immediate future may call for close examination of a number of factors. In scheduling our work it may be rather important to agree on the order and specific time-table for consideration of various issues, taking into account all relevant considerations. Thus, in selecting the time for the examination of the question of the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests, we will have to bear in mind the timing of the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Seismic Experts, and so on.

Apart from selecting the most opportune time for our work in specific areas, we shall have to consider the modalities of such work -- shall we need to establish subsidiary bodies, and if so, when; shall we carry on our work in plenary meetings, or should we fix the time for informal sessions, perhaps with the benefit of the presence of experts?

The Polish delegation is flexible and open to all constructive suggestions in those regards, especially with respect to the mode of our work. However, we would wish to deal as soon as possible with the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons, a subject in which, as the Committee knows, my delegation has traditionally taken special interest. In our view, the question of radiological weapons and that of new types of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the security assurances, also commend themselves for urgent consideration in the immediate future.

(Mr. Sujka, Poland)

Although my delegation has no particularly strong views, we would favour a course of action whereby the desirability or otherwise of the establishment of a subsidiary organ of the Committee would be determined only in the light of a substantive examination by the plenary of the Committee of the given agenda item, in accordance with our work programme.

At the same time, we are entirely prepared to examine in a spirit of co-operation the draft proposal which you, Mr. Chairman, may wish to present as the result of the extensive consultations which you have pursued with members of the Committee.

While the Committee on Disarmament was regrettably not able last year to report to the General Assembly any tangible results in the form of a concrete draft of a multilateral juridical instrument in this or that urgent and pressing field -- a fact noted with considerable concern by the General Assembly -- the work performed by the Committee last year cannot be dismissed as meaningless. Indeed, the consideration which we were able to give to the questions of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and disarmament, security assurances, chemical weapons and radiological weapons was consistently valid and significant in so far as it helped to clarify many intricate political, military, scientific or technical aspects. There is no question that the discussions last year helped to explore the procedural approaches to dealing with concrete problems. They also mapped the way to the most appropriate manner of resolving some of the remaining difficulties.

In fact, the positive results of the Committee's work last year have been recognized by and are reflected in some of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly last year. Careful reading of these resolutions as well as of our own report to the General Assembly would not only refresh our memory but would certainly facilitate drawing up the work programme for 1980.

The Polish delegation is far from attaching undue importance to the formal side of the work programme. Indeed, we feel that no matter how comprehensive and consistent, the work programme alone will not advance the cause of disarmament one inch. Nor will indignation and criticism speed up the pace of disarmament negotiations until and unless all the members of the Committee resolve to redouble their efforts in the field of disarmament. There is no need to argue, it is obvious that in order to make significant progress we must command the political will of all States, particularly those represented around this table.

(Mr. Sujka, Poland)

My delegation comes to this session of the Committee with specific instructions: to seek to contribute in a constructive spirit to the disarmament negotiations which would result in equitable agreements based on the recognition of the principle of parity and of undiminished security of all parties. These instructions translate into the language of practical action the longstanding principles and the traditional policy of my Government and my country, indeed of all the socialist States members of the Warsaw Treaty.

As will be recalled, at their Berlin meeting early last December, the foreign ministers of the Warsaw Treaty Member States were unanimous about the vital urgency of seeking to secure military détente in Europe. To this end they endorsed a proposal calling for an all-European conference on a policy-making level to examine all specific questions relating to military détente and disarmament on our Continent.

Renewed support for such a conference was underlined in the joint communiqué issued on 18 January following the Moscow meeting between the Foreign Minister of Poland, Emil Wojtaszek, and the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, Andrei Gromyko, who recognized the urgent need to halt the upward swing of the arms-race spiral in Europe, to lower the level of the military confrontation obtaining in our part of the world.

The international situation obtaining today differs considerably from that prevailing at the end of our session last year. It has, in fact, seriously deteriorated. The total responsibility for this must be laid squarely with those who deliberately seek to escalate the nuclear-arms race, who repudiate the principles of parity and equal security in favour of a doctrine of superiority and negotiations from strength.

The December decision of the NATO Council concerning the deployment of a new generation of nuclear weapons in a number of west-European countries was not exactly a measure designed to lower the level of military confrontation in Europe. The failure to ratify and put into effect the SALT II agreement was not exactly a step taken to facilitate attempts to halt and reverse the strategic-nuclear-arms race.

We must recognize that these developments have aggravated the political climate in Europe and in the world at large. They complicated disarmament efforts, including those which we pursue in the Committee on Disarmament.

One way out from the present difficulties was outlined in the communiqué of the meeting of the foreign ministers of Poland and of the Soviet Union which I have just referred to. Addressing the question of middle-range nuclear missile weapons,

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the two ministers stressed that effective negotiations in that matter could be rendered possible only by changing the NATO decision on the production and deployment in western Europe of new American missile weapons, or on the strength of a formal decision to postpone its implementation.

It is the considered view of my delegation that the Committee on Disarmament cannot be discouraged by the grave international situation. On the contrary, in times like this, the Committee, an organ of multilateral disarmament negotiations, must intensify its efforts to prove its full efficacy and to live up to the tasks which are facing it. To this end, my delegation intends to co-operate with all members of the Committee in the pursuit of our common endeavours.

With your permission, I should like now to turn to the substantive issues which we expect to see included in the agenda and work programme which we will be preparing for the current session.

First -- the prohibition of chemical weapons. My delegation is convinced that in the light of the resolution of the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly -- as well as our discussions last year -- that issue must be accorded high priority in our work programme. In this regard, my delegation, as well as those of other socialist countries, has been flexible all along as to the best way of dealing with that problem, prepared to examine any constructive suggestions, including that for the establishment of an Ad Hoc working group. Only the evident lack of consensus prompted my delegation to seek ways of overcoming that difficulty. One of them was to invite the Committee to work out a general outline of a future CW convention.

It is our view that a decision as to whether and when to establish such a subsidiary body should best be taken in the light of consideration of that subject by the Committee, in accordance with its programme of work, which is to be decided upon.

In this connexion, we feel that the working group's mandate should include a recommendation to elaborate first the definitive outline, along the lines proposed in the Netherlands delegation's documents concerning a questionnaire and the working document CD/44 which my delegation had the honour to submit. On the basis of such a definite outline, the working group should be asked to carry out a detailed analysis of specific issues and questions, with the assistance of experts, with respect to which basic agreement has been reached bilaterally and where general consensus emerged in the Committee.

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The initiative which the socialist countries, including my own, submitted last year with respect to negotiations on ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing their stockpiles until they have been completely destroyed leaves no doubt as to the high priority which we attach to early and meaningful progress in this area. As will be recalled, the relevant resolution which the General Assembly adopted at its thirty-fourth session requested the Committee "to initiate, as a matter of high priority, negotiations, with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States, on the question of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 50 of the Final Document" of the first special session devoted to disarmament.

The priority and urgency of the question of the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests is generally recognized. At the same time, it is increasingly evident that the possibilities of substantial progress in that area will be seriously limited as long as the participants in the tripartite negotiations do not show enough flexibility to overcome the existing difficulties. Their negotiations must be concluded at the earliest date, and the results should offer the basis for the Committee's considerations in that regard.

The Polish delegation believes that the Committee will devote special attention to the question of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is our view that the Committee should pursue its work in this regard with due expediency, especially within the tested framework of the Ad Hoc working group, aiming at the elaboration of an international convention. My delegation intends to make a constructive contribution to the work of the Ad Hoc Group.

The item entitled "new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons" attracted considerable attention last year, especially in view of the submission by the USSR and the United States of an "Agreed joint ... proposal on major elements of a treaty prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons." I believe that there should be no difficulty in detailed examination in the Committee of that document with a view to its finalization and the submission to the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly of yet another agreement in the area of arms limitation.

At the same time, my delegation considers that the Committee must envisage in its programme of work a series of meetings, with the participation of experts,

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in order to identify the possibility of concluding a general convention that would outlaw research and development work in the area of weapons of mass destruction.

While the urgent agenda items which I have just referred to will certainly claim most of the Committee's attention in the weeks and months ahead -- I believe that appropriate time and modalities must be found in order to deal with the question of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, a programme which will map out the most direct way to international security and peace in a disarming and disarmed world.

In keeping with the consistent and firm policy of my Government, the Polish delegation is determined to co-operate with all members of the Committee on Disarmament in order to promote that ultimate goal.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me and to my predecessor.

I would like now to go back to the draft decision which was circulated this morning to members of the Committee. Delegations may recall that at its forty-eighth plenary meeting, the Committee took a decision for a continued mandate to the Ad Hoc Group of Seismic Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. In that connexion, it was also decided that the Ad Hoc Group would hold its first meeting, under its new mandate, late in January or early in February 1980. During consultations with members of the Committee, I found general agreement that the Ad Hoc Group should convene between 11 and 22 February 1980. If there are no objections, it is so decided.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any delegation wish to speak? If this is not the case, I wish to remind the Committee that tomorrow, at 11 a.m., we will hold an informal meeting in this room to exchange views on questions relating to the provisional agenda and possibly on the programme of work. The next plenary meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday, 7 February 1980 at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.