

FINAL RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDREDTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 3 March 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. A. Skalli

(Morocco)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. A. TAFFAR
Mr. M. MAACHI

Argentina: Mr. J.C. CARASALES
Mr. R. GARCIA MORITAM

Australia: Mr. D. SADLEIR
Mr. R. STEELE
Mr. T. FINDLAY

Belgium: Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

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

Bulgaria: Mr. K. TELLALOV
Mr. B. GRINBERG
Mr. P. POPCHEV
Mr. C. PRAMOV

Burma: U MAUNG MAUNG GYI
U TIN KYAW HLAING
U THAN TUN

Canada: Mr. G.R. SKINNER
Mr. M.C. HAMBLIN

China: Mr. LI LUYE
Mr. TIAN JIN
Mr. LI CHANGHE
Mrs. GE YUYUN
Mrs. ZHOU YUNHUA

Cuba:

Czechoslovakia: Mr. M. VEJVODA
Mr. A. CIMA

Egypt: Mr. El S.A.R. EL REEDY

Ethiopia:

Mr. T. TERREFE
Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE
Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. F. SAYATZ
Mr. M. NOTZEL

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. F. ELBE
Mr. W. ROHR

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES
Mr. F. GADJA
Mr. T. TOTH

India:

Mr. M. KUMAR

Indonesia:

Mrs. P. RAMADHAN
Mr. B. DARMOSUTANTO
Mr. I.H. WIRAATMADJA
Mr. F. QASIM

Iran:

Mr. F. SHAHABI SIRJANI

Italy:

Mr. M. ALESSI
Mr. B. CABRAS
Mr. C.M. OLIVA
Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan:

Mr. R. IMAI
Mr. M. TAKAHASHI
Mr. M. KONISHI
Mr. T. KAWAKITA
Mr. K. TANAKA
Mr. M. YAMAMOTO
Mr. K. FUKUSHIMA

Kenya: Mr. D.C.C. DON NANJIRA

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Mrs. Z. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. O. CHIMIDREGZEN

Morocco: Mr. A. SKALLI
Mr. S.M. RAHHALI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. J. RAMAKER

Nigeria: Mr. A.N.C. NWAUZOMUDOH
Mr. J.O. OBOH
Mr. L.O. AKINDELE
Mr. A.A. ADEPOJU
Miss I.E.C. UKEJE

Pakistan: Mr. M. AHMAD
Mr. T. ALTAF

Peru: Mr. P. CANNOCK

Poland: Mr. J. ZAWALONKA
Mr. S. KONIK
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ

Romania: Mr. I. DATCU
Mr. T. MELESCANU
Mr. L. TOADER

Sri Lanka: Mr. A.T. JAYAKODDY
Mr. H.M.G.S. PALIHAKKARA

Sweden: Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. C.L. HYLTIENIUS
Mr. G. EKHOLM
Mr. H. BERGLUND
Mr. J. LUNDIN
Mrs. A. LAU-ERIKSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. R.M. TIMERBAEV
Mr. G. VORONTZOV
Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV
Mr. Y.V. KOSTENKO
Mr. J.A. KROKHA
Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN
Mr. G.N. VASHADZE

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE
Mr. L.J. MIDDLETON
Mrs. J.I. LINK
Miss J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

Mr. L.G. FIELDS
Mr. H.L. CALHOUN
Mr. P. CORDEN
Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER
Mr. W. HECKROTTE
Mr. R.L. HORNE
Mr. J. MARTIN

Venezuela:

Mr. O. GARCIA GARCIA

Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS
Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. O. GNOK

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

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the
Committee on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I declare open the 200th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Yugoslavia, Spain, Brazil, Pakistan, the German Democratic Republic and Burma.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Vidas.

Mr. VIDAS (Yugoslavia): Mr. Chairman, it is a particular pleasure to congratulate you, the representative of a non-aligned and friendly country, Morocco, as Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament for this month, and to assure you of the full co-operation of my delegation in carrying out your difficult task.

I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Dugersurenginn Erdembileg of the Mongolian People's Republic. He had a particularly delicate task in coping with the many difficulties at the beginning of the Committee's work which seem to have become an inseparable feature of the beginning of every session.

I would like to welcome at the same time the new members of the Committee, the distinguished Ambassadors of Algeria, India, China, Kenya, Japan, Sweden, Venezuela and the United Kingdom, and to wish them success in their work.

I am very pleased to be able to congratulate, on behalf of Yugoslavia and my delegation, the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1982, Ambassador García Robles and Mrs. Alva Myrdal, who have particularly distinguished themselves in the ranks of this Committee. Their personal devotion to the cause of disarmament is a considerable contribution to the struggle against the arms race, for the prevention of the nuclear threat and war and for disarmament and peace in the world. I wish them many years of continued success in their work.

The Committee on Disarmament begins its work this year at a time when international political and economic relations are passing through a serious crisis. Prevailing trends in the international situation give cause for grave concern and pose a serious threat to global peace and security.

Speaking at the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Petar Stambolić, pointed out that never in its history has mankind been faced with such a threat as the one posed today by the arms race between the big powers and blocs. This race is even more dangerous since it appears both as the cause and as the effect of confrontation between the militarily and technically most powerful countries in the world, consuming enormous material and human resources.

The world is shocked by the fact that total military spending in 1982 amounted to over \$US 650 billion. This is more than the entire income of 1,500 million people living in the 50 poorest countries.

The build-up of arms, increased military forces and the strengthening of military alliances have not brought greater security either to the world or to individual countries. On the contrary, over-all security has been reduced to an even lower level, as more weapons do not mean more security.

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

The continued arms race means a growing threat to international peace and security and even to the very survival of mankind. The nuclear and conventional arms build-up threatens to stall the efforts aimed at reaching the goals of development, to become an obstacle on the road of achieving the new international economic order and to hinder the solution of other vital problems facing mankind.

The basic question confronting mankind today is that of its survival. The existing arsenals of nuclear weapons and their continued augmentation both in quantity and quality have created a situation of unprecedented danger to all life on this planet. The danger of nuclear war has lately become even more exacerbated as a result of doctrines asserting the possibility of a limited nuclear war through the sophistication and build-up of theatre nuclear weapons intended for such a war. This directly opens the door to a general nuclear catastrophe.

In the presence of the nuclear danger, a widespread race in conventional weapons is continuing and accelerating. A particular threat comes from the development of new chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction, whose lethal power has become equal to that of nuclear weapons. Peace in the world and the independence of many countries are increasingly threatened precisely by the widespread use of conventional weapons in many local wars and armed interventions. All this justifies the demand for exerting efforts aimed at reducing both nuclear and conventional weapons. Removing the threat of a world war -- a nuclear war -- is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority.

The increase in military spending now under way threatens the economic security of all countries. The present increase in military expenditure is in dramatic contrast with the want and poverty in which two-thirds of the world's population live and comes at a time of economic tension unprecedented in the post-war period. The arms race contributes to the aggravation of the protracted crisis of the world economy and over-all international economic relations, entailing grave political and social consequences. This has a particularly adverse effect on developing countries and many of them are in a very difficult position which jeopardizes their independent political and economic development. Widespread general insecurity, which is the result of the arms race, is becoming a universal phenomenon, and its consequence is the arming of the developing countries in many parts of the world. Instead of fully mobilizing their own resources for their independent economic development, they are compelled to spend vast sums on weapons in order to protect their independence and territorial integrity. This leads to a slowing down or postponement of the settling of the urgent problems of their economic and social development, while the world economy is plunging into a deeper crisis.

In his statement delivered at the session of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federal Chamber of the Yugoslav Assembly on 17 February 1983, the Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, Mr. Lazar Mojsov, said that the present state of disarmament negotiations is very disquieting. It has been characterized for some years either by stagnation or a lack of concrete results. The multilateral negotiations on priority disarmament issues, especially those concerning nuclear disarmament, have still not reached the stage of genuine consideration. The main reason for this situation remains the absence of political will on the part of the principal protagonists in the arms race to accept the limitation of military power and thus make possible genuine progress with regard to the halting of the arms race. The block approach to security is founded on the illusion about the possibility of controlling the so-called "balance of powers", on a rising curve of constant armament, while some propound doctrines on conducting local and limited nuclear wars, which is in profound contradiction with the most vital interests of the international community and is inevitably conducive to a further deterioration of world relations

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

We are following carefully the current negotiations of the two powers on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons as well as medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe and we support all proposals that can contribute to a genuine limitation and reduction of all nuclear weapon systems.

In order to ensure the success of negotiations on the limitation of arms and disarmament, it is necessary for the countries which are most directly involved in these negotiations to show greater resoluteness to overcome the difficulties which constantly threaten to halt this process. As is always the case with disarmament negotiations, it is necessary to make use of all opportunities to halt the present alarming trend in the arms race because, as experience has shown, this may be a lost opportunity.

The results of the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the USSR on nuclear disarmament will be of decisive importance for the future prospects of arms limitation and disarmament as well as for the general climate in other negotiating bodies. We are thinking particularly of the negotiations conducted in Vienna on the limitation of conventional forces in central Europe as well as the current session of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe taking place in Madrid. As a European country, we are particularly concerned over the vast quantities of nuclear and conventional weapons deployed in Europe which are ready for use.

Yugoslavia, together with other non-aligned and neutral countries, is making sustained efforts in order that positive results be achieved at the Madrid meeting and especially in relation to the holding of a European disarmament conference within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

It has been the longstanding view of Yugoslavia that all categories of nuclear weapon systems in Europe and elsewhere should be completely eliminated. One of the most destabilizing systems, which is outside any ongoing negotiations, concerns tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and the adjacent sea area. We consider that it is high time to start negotiations on these weapons as well.

It is our conviction that there can be an effective limitation or elimination of nuclear or sophisticated conventional weapons only if all these systems are negotiated on, if no exceptions are made and if the disarmament process encompasses all regions of the world. We feel that regional disarmament efforts can play a first-rate role in international action for disarmament. Full support should be given to endeavours to turn certain regions into zones of peace and co-operation or into denuclearized zones, such as the Indian Ocean, northern and central Europe, the Balkans, the Mediterranean and others.

Yugoslavia welcomed the initiative of the Swedish Government concerning the idea of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in central Europe and expressed its readiness to participate in possible talks on the modalities of establishing such a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Europe which would extend from the north to the south of Europe, through its central part. Yugoslavia also has its own proposal to make the Mediterranean a zone of peace and co-operation.

There are very important tasks before the Committee on Disarmament this year as well. The General Assembly of the United Nations addressed to the Committee on Disarmament at its thirty-seventh session a record number of resolutions. They refer to priority disarmament issues. Although the number of resolutions adopted is not the only or the most reliable criterion, it is, nevertheless, indicative of the importance and urgency accorded to disarmament matters by the world organization. They are, in our view, also a reflection of the considerably increased concern of world public opinion over the growing arms race and the demand for the most

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urgent opening of the disarmament process. This is why it is incomprehensible that the Committee on Disarmament, which is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, cannot reach an agreement on its agenda.

The publicly expressed readiness of some States in favour of significant reductions in or the complete elimination of particular systems of weapons is often contrary to their actual behaviour, which is especially manifested when the agenda and programme of work of the Committee are being debated. Since the agenda is considered at informal meetings, behind closed doors, this may give the wrong impression as to what is a genuine interest and what is only a limited or propaganda interest on the part of particular States with respect to certain issues or areas of disarmament.

There is no doubt that informal meetings of the Committee are useful when considering issues of an organizational nature. Such meetings, however, must not be an end in themselves but should prepare the ground for negotiations. It is a common occurrence, nevertheless, that the consideration of some priority issues at informal meetings of the Committee becomes the graveyard for those issues.

The present impasse in the Committee's work also stems from the bringing of some elements of conflict between particular States into the Committee. Thus, the Committee finds itself in a situation in which, instead of negotiating on priority issues, it exhausts itself on organizational matters whose background is of a political nature.

It is high time for the Committee to organize its work so as to avoid, in the future, unnecessary and protracted discussions concerning the agenda, programme of work, the setting up of working groups and the election of their chairmen. This should be a matter of routine.

The Committee should, in the view of my delegation, reach an agreement most urgently, either as a recorded decision of the Committee or as an understanding presented by the Chairman. Such an agreement should stipulate that, once an item has been placed on the agenda or a working group with an already existing mandate established, they should be automatically renewed at the beginning of each year's session of the Committee. This would apply as long as there is no decision to remove the item from the agenda or to suspend or terminate the group's activity. Once the working groups commence their work, the delegations should be able, if they deem it necessary, immediately to request the consideration of organizational matters or of their programmes of work, including the election or re-election of the chairman of the working group, modifications of its mandate, etc.

In order to ensure respect for the principle of equitable regional representation in chairing the work of the working groups of the Committee on Disarmament, a simultaneous agreement should be made on the modalities of implementing the principle of rotation. These agreements should be formulated in a sufficiently flexible manner as to accommodate all regional groups.

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

If it is so agreed, at the beginning of the session, the Committee would only consider requests for inscribing new items on the agenda or setting up new working groups. The Committee's work could be carried out right away on the basis of the existing agenda and within the existing working groups. This would help avoid situations in which the resumption of the work of the existing working groups would be conditioned by the establishment of new working groups, which would be tantamount to a veto. There is no risk that this procedure would favour any delegation or group of delegations. It must also be taken into account that delegates would be unable to participate actively in the work of several working groups going on simultaneously.

The cited difficulties in the Committee's work are such as can be easily overcome by concerted efforts and goodwill.

Before dwelling on specific issues, I would like to add something more concerning the agenda. I wish to reiterate the importance my delegation attaches to the inscribing on the agenda of an item on the prevention of nuclear war as well as the creation of a corresponding working group. The reasons which prompt us to do so are already explained in the joint proposal of the Group of 21 (CD/341).

We attach equal importance to the establishment of a working group on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These two working groups could work in such a manner as to cover all problems in which the members of the Committee have expressed an interest. These are two vast and urgent issues of complex contents whose consideration would take some time. It is, therefore, necessary for these two working groups to start work as soon as possible. The Group of 21, which has put forward these requests, has proceeded from realistic assumptions and expects an in-depth and substantive consideration of the above issues.

The most urgent task before the Committee is the elaboration of a comprehensive programme of disarmament. It is fortunate that the Working Group on this subject is beginning its work under the guidance of the distinguished representative of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles, who has put in considerable personal efforts to that end.

At the present stage of negotiations it is necessary, in our opinion, to reach a conceptual agreement on the programme at the very beginning. It is obvious that no progress can be made if positions remain inflexible. The substance of our preliminary thoughts is the need to secure sustained negotiations on the disarmament programme that should lead to general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The programme should be formulated according to priorities that could be supplemented and which should be negotiated or agreed at subsequent stages. It is fundamental, in our view, to ensure understanding on the need for periodic but sustained consideration of the implementation of the agreed programme, its constant supplementing and the permanent negotiation of specific new disarmament measures.

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

Such a dynamic and flexible approach could help remove doubts that unrealistic demands are being made for the creation of rigid programmes fixed once and for all. There are some ongoing negotiations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament whose successful conclusion could be expected in a foreseeable future. It can also be assumed that negotiations on other issues could also start relatively soon. We would like to draw attention to the fact that we always envisage a dynamic programme of uninterrupted negotiations and not a fixed, idealistic programme, regardless of how well it was made, which only expresses wishes that cannot come true in the foreseeable future.

One of the priority items and an area which is promising for an agreement is the prohibition of chemical weapons. New proposals, submitted by the delegations of the USSR and the United States, as well as the proposals of other delegations which have accumulated with time, offer a solid basis for the completion as soon as possible through intensified efforts of the negotiations conducted so far. We consider that the time has come to initiate the drafting of particular provisions of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. After many years with no results, the Committee must show that it is capable of at least beginning the drafting of the convention this year.

As concerns other agenda items, my delegation will have the opportunity to express its views at subsequent meetings of our Committee.

At present, however, we consider it imperative to emphasize particularly the enhancing and revival of negotiations on particular disarmament issues at all levels and the opening of negotiations on substantive disarmament issues, especially those concerning nuclear disarmament. We are certain that disarmament will be one of the priority issues at the forthcoming seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, thus contributing to focusing attention on the urgent need to open the disarmament process.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Vidas for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. In accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its 199th plenary meeting, I have great pleasure in welcoming among us today the representative of Spain, Ambassador Laiglesia, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. LAIGLESIA (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to express my satisfaction at the fact that my first statement at a plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament, during its 1983 session and in accordance with the rules of procedure, is being made under the chairmanship of the representative of a country with which Spain has very close ties. I am sure that under your expert guidance the Committee will achieve the positive results we are all impatiently awaiting.

I should also like to reiterate in this forum my warmest congratulations to Ambassador García Robles the award to whom of the Nobel Peace Prize honours all of us who dedicate our efforts to the cause of disarmament.

Among the objectives of the international community, the effort to combat the arms race should take priority. On the progress achieved in this sphere depends the reduction of the risk of the outbreak of armed conflicts, which cause so much suffering to so many peoples.

The new Government of Spain is ready to contribute, to the utmost of its ability, to the success of the negotiations under way with a view to the adoption of measures to curb the arms race. It is for this reason that it wishes to play a larger part in the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. As you know, if the composition of this Committee is changed, we should like to become a member of it. However, in accordance with its rules of procedure concerning the participation of non-member States, ever since the United Nations General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to disarmament, gave it its present form, Spain has participated regularly in the Committee's plenary meetings and our experts have taken part in the work of the various working groups. Although we believe that we have fully demonstrated our interest in the negotiations taking place in this Committee, the new Government of Spain would like our contribution to them to be as great as possible, both in substance and in extent.

The Committee's agenda is extremely ambitious and covers almost all the problems relating to disarmament. It is our intention, therefore, to take part in the work on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, on the elaboration of effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, on radiological weapons and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. On this occasion, however, we shall confine ourselves to speaking about the item on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, and that for two reasons. In the first place because we believe that the time is sufficiently ripe for a draft treaty on that question and we do not think that it would be rash to suppose that the negotiations under way could give rise to such a draft in the reasonably near future. In the second place because the Spanish delegation has given this problem particular attention, both in its statements at plenary meetings and in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the subject.

For the reasons I have given, I have the honour to submit to the Committee for its consideration the working paper in document CD/350, in which we refer to the report of its Chairman to the Working Group on Chemical Weapons on the consultations he held with experts on technical issues, which is contained in document CD/CW/WP.141.

(Mr. Laiglesia, Spain)

The importance of this report which suggests an agenda for the meeting of experts to be held this spring, has led us to study it very carefully and to comment on certain of the points contained in it. It is our view that the principal obstacles to the completion of a draft treaty on the prohibition of the manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons are technical in nature, for we believe that the political will exists and that on many aspects — for example that of on-site verification — considerable progress has been made. We therefore feel that the most useful thing to do at this stage of the negotiations is to make a more thorough study of valid methods which would enable us to determine with absolute precision which substances should be prohibited and consequently destroyed. It is likewise important to determine the most effective methods of establishing the degree of toxicity of certain substances capable of being used for the manufacture of chemical weapons. It is also important to clarify ideas about the instruments that could be used to verify the destruction processes and, where necessary, to check possible violations of the treaty as regards the non-production of chemical weapons or their precursors. The latter also give rise to technical problems which should be investigated and we ought, so far as possible, to differentiate between those which can be used for various purposes — among them chemical weapons, including binary weapons — and those which have virtually no other purpose but the production of chemical weapons. In this connection we must not overlook the problems connected with the so-called additives, which help to improve the quality of this type of weapon. Lastly, the degree of toxicity by aerosol inhalation and the methods for the protection of the environment during the carrying out of the procedures for the destruction of stocks of component substances of chemical weapons, are also important.

The working paper which I have the honour to submit to the Committee for its consideration is based on the content of the report of the Chairman of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons on his consultations with experts on technical issues, which was circulated as document CD/CW/WP.41. Our working paper consists of four parts. The first part refers to aspects to be taken into account with respect to the lists of agents in the category of "other harmful chemicals" and the list of important precursors. In this connection we stress the complexity of the chemical industry as well as the work of certain national bodies which study the harmfulness of chemical substances. We also suggest the possibility of establishing a system of "open lists" the contents of which could be changed in accordance with developments in the technological capabilities of the States signatories of the treaty.

The second part is concerned with the formulation of recommendations concerning methods for the determination of toxicity by aerosol inhalation. In addition to mentioning a number of systems that are used in various countries, this section refers to certain aspects which should be studied separately in order to determine the toxic effects produced, using, as is suggested, a standardized method for the purposes of the treaty, while recognizing various other methods that might be used by States, which would be contrasted with the former.

The third part deals with the technical evaluation of the use of specialized information-gathering systems (black boxes) as components of a chemical weapons verification system. It suggests a new definition of the black boxes, one which, we believe, is stricter than that appearing in paragraph 13 of document CD/CW/WP.41.

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Lastly, the fourth part of the document deals with methods for the protection of the environment during the destruction of chemical weapons, and it refers to various matters connected with air quality and the parameters of pollutants.

We hope that this document will contribute to the success of the work being done by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons and that the Committee on Disarmament will be able to put before the United Nations General Assembly as soon as possible the text of a draft treaty on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons which the international community will be able to adopt. More than half a century has passed since the adoption of the Protocol which prohibited the use of such weapons in war. Nevertheless, and despite the fact that for a fairly lengthy period such weapons appeared to have been abandoned by the major powers, there have for some time now been large stocks of such weapons in the arsenals of a number of powers. It is therefore urgently necessary to adopt the proposed treaty in order to remove the risk of the violation of the provisions of the 1925 Protocol. Although most States are signatories of the Protocol, there is no doubt that the existence of chemical weapons always constitutes a great danger, for the possibility cannot be excluded that they may be used through miscalculation or as the result of an unforeseeable accident. If this is one of the risks in the sphere of nuclear weapons, there is no reason why the same thing could not happen as regards chemical weapons, and if, as far as nuclear weapons are concerned, an escalation is probably inevitable, the same is also true if someone uses toxic gases in a conflict. It is therefore important that no one should be in possession of them.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Laiglesia for his statement and for his kind words about my country. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador de Souza e Silva.

Mr. DE SOUZA E SILVA (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, I shall devote my statement today to the nuclear arms race and its inevitable corollary, the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In their statements before this Committee, since the opening of the 1983 session, the nuclear-weapon powers and their allies have paid considerable attention to the danger of nuclear war and to matters pertaining to nuclear armament. Invariably, however, they continue to confront this Committee with positions that preclude, in practice, any possibility of serious multilateral treatment of these pressing issues. Either by explicitly arguing that the Committee ought to stay away from dealing with nuclear disarmament, or by adopting positions not conducive to the effective discharge of the Committee's mandate, they have in fact prevented this body from responding so far to the recommendations of the General Assembly adopted by consensus and unanimously reaffirmed last year in the most categorical way.

Let me briefly examine the current stance of the nuclear-weapon powers with regard to multilateral negotiations on nuclear matters.

The United States, with the unfailing support of the United Kingdom, has long espoused the view that this Committee is not the appropriate forum for any negotiation on nuclear disarmament. A few weeks ago, Vice-President Bush stated in

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this chamber that his country fully accepted its special responsibilities in the nuclear area, and went on to say that they were being discharged "in the most effective way we know", that is, in the bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union.

I do not mean to underestimate the significance of those bilateral negotiations. They are very important and must be pursued. But we continue to deplore that now, as in the past, such negotiations have been dependent upon the wavering relations between the Superpowers and their search for public support, instead of responding to a coherent policy stemming from specific commitments undertaken by them. Therefore they should be constantly reminded that their special responsibility is for disarmament, not for the bilateral management of world power. For decades now they have tried, and so far failed, to achieve effective negotiations in the nuclear field. Their consistent failure to live up to their obligations increases the responsibility of this multilateral forum, the Committee on Disarmament.

In the case of the USSR, the outside observer does not have at his disposal an abundance of material from which to ascertain its positions or understand its motivations. But the constant escalation of Soviet nuclear arsenals, the latest example of which is the deployment of the new SS-20 missiles, does little to warrant its many initiatives in the multilateral forums. A large number of such initiatives, incidentally, appear designed to obtain international endorsement for certain cornerstones of Soviet external policy rather than to speed up progress in disarmament negotiations.

China and France have similar positions regarding their own engagement in nuclear disarmament. They contend that there must be first a substantial reduction in the Superpowers' arsenals, a position which provides a convenient shelter for the extreme discretion of those two countries when approaching the subject in multilateral forums. In a recent speech Mr. Hernu, the French Minister of Defence, said about his country's nuclear force that the means available to it must simply be enough to reach the threshold of deterrence: that, he said, is the rule of sufficiency. He stated further: "Nuclear deterrence enables us to be responsible, strong and discreet as to our use of that force".

During the almost 40 years of the nuclear age, experience has demonstrated that the doctrines and practice of the nuclear-weapon powers have not only prevented any progress, either bilateral or multilateral, in nuclear disarmament negotiations; in fact, those doctrines and practice have generated and provided incentive to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its possible dimensions.

As for vertical proliferation, it suffices to compare the size and destructive power of present arsenals with those, let us say, of 10 or 20 years ago. It is significant, in this context, to recall that the idea of a nuclear freeze has been a recurring proposal by one or the other Superpower, and so has been its rejection by the adversary. In 1967, when the United States was about to complete its build-up of 1,000 Minuteman missiles and 41 Polaris submarines, President Johnson made a freeze proposal. It was promptly rejected by the USSR on the grounds that it would legitimize a situation of American superiority. Recently, as the build-up of

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Soviet SS-20s was well under way, it was the USSR's turn to propose a freeze, immediately turned down by the United States on much the same grounds. As events go, we can reasonably expect another American freeze proposal a few years from now, followed by a categorical Soviet rejection. The elusive search for superiority seems to be the mainspring of vertical proliferation.

Recently, however, a new and more ominous phenomenon has come to the forefront: a direct offspring of the vertical dimension of proliferation which we might call "geographical proliferation". Not satisfied with the destructive capability of the weapons based in their respective territories, the nuclear-weapon powers, and particularly the Superpowers, have sped up the dissemination of their weapons over the four corners of the earth. Nuclear weapons are now being increasingly deployed on a permanent basis outside their own boundaries, be it on land, in the air or under the oceans, perhaps even in zones where they have been prohibited by international agreement.

Their guidance and navigational systems are already in orbit above our heads, and it seems a matter of time until the weapons themselves start circling Earth like asteroids of doom. The Superpowers justify this persistent geographical proliferation with the need, and the alleged right, to protect their own security; but the legitimate right of the non-nuclear-weapon nations to their own security in the face of the nuclear threat is systematically overlooked or dismissed outright. On 15 February last, Ambassador Jayakoddy of Sri Lanka eloquently touched upon this situation in the context of the Indian Ocean.

One last word regarding vertical proliferation. While the Soviet Union has through the years relentlessly increased its nuclear weapons capability, the United States, thanks to its scientific and technological advancement, has invented, developed and produced every single new system of nuclear weapons, from atomic and hydrogen bombs to nuclear submarines, multiple warheads, neutron explosives, cruise missiles, and so on, and the list is not by any means exhaustive.

One inevitable conclusion flows from the stated positions and the deeds of the present five nuclear-weapon powers: they are in fact justifying and encouraging proliferation in all its dimensions. Nations which have so far chosen not to exercise their sovereign nuclear military option noted the British Prime Minister's assertion, at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, that nuclear weapons are here to stay, and that they must be credited for 35 years of peace in Europe, a statement in line with the christening of the MX missile as the "peacekeeper". Not less impressive was Foreign Minister Gromyko's statement last month in Bonn when he said that "the principle of equality is the holy of holies which the Soviet Union cannot abandon", and which other States, as he continued, "should not abandon either". Even more clearly, President Mitterand stated also in Bonn last January, that "war must remain impossible and those who might think of unleashing it must be deterred from doing so. Our judgement and our conviction -- those of France -- are that nuclear weapons, the instruments of that deterrence, whether we like it or not, remain the guarantee of peace provided there is a balance of forces".

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All these statements, coupled with both vertical and geographical proliferation, reflect a deliberate policy of advocating and justifying for themselves the possession and maintenance of nuclear forces, now and for the future. Besides negating the objective of nuclear disarmament, such policies seriously jeopardize the attainment of an effective non-proliferation regime and contradict its most cherished symbol, the non-proliferation Treaty, so far complied with only by its non-nuclear-weapon parties.

The international order, however, can only be based upon the principle of sovereign equality of nations; what a handful of countries deem justified and necessary for themselves may be, at some point, also justifiable and necessary for others. If nuclear weapons are to be considered the only credible guarantor of peace and security for future generations, as stated in the doctrines mentioned above, there is little justification for their exclusive possession by the present self-appointed nuclear-weapon States. Thus, what would be the reasons to prevent the spread to, and the possession by other nations of nuclear means of guaranteeing peace and security? After all, as one of the statesmen I quoted above reminds us, responsibility, strength and discretion flow from the possession of nuclear weapons. Such a situation will have been the choice and the responsibility of the present five nuclear-weapon powers. In the nuclear age, it could well be said that non-proliferation should begin at home. The element of morality has been recently injected into the rhetoric concerning certain types of weapons or particular systems of weapons of mass destruction. If that element is going to be taken into account in our deliberations we can only say that the mere possession of any weapon of mass destruction, of whatever kind or range, cannot be based, by any standards, upon moral grounds.

Such postures and practice puzzle the will and run counter to the professed goal of preventing nuclear war, unanimously recognized and reaffirmed as "the most acute and urgent task of the present day". The statements I quoted above lead to the conclusion that the present policy of the nuclear-weapon powers is to prevent nuclear war by increasing and improving their arsenals in order to discourage aggression, or by achieving a plateau where their destructive capacity can match each other. They seem to concur, however, that nuclear war must be prevented. Vice-President Bush told this Committee that "the elimination of the threat of nuclear war is clearly of paramount importance to all of us", and Ambassador Issraelyan stated, on 1 February, that the prevention of nuclear war is "the main present-day question". Yet, as I noted at the beginning of my statement, either by their explicit positions or by their actual behaviour, the Superpowers have not only increased the threat of nuclear war but so far precluded multilateral negotiations on how to prevent it.

Effective multilateral negotiations on another issue, which has been recognized as the first step to nuclear disarmament, have also been blocked by the actions and policies of the nuclear-weapon powers. The achievement of a comprehensive test-ban

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treaty has been considered by two of them in the last couple of years as "a long-term goal"; another has repeatedly claimed its support for a ban on nuclear-weapon testing, but the relevant proposal recently submitted to this Committee presents such flaws in its key verification provisions that one could question the sincerity of purpose of the proponent; the remaining two simply decided to ignore even the partial discussions which took place in the relevant Working Group.

Such attitudes not only denote lack of interest in resolving one of the most pressing issues on the disarmament agenda — the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests — but illustrate the conclusion that testing continues to be necessary to push through their armament programmes. Thus proliferation, in all its dimensions, will proceed unabated. But the fact remains that the refusal to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty is a violation of binding juridical obligations entered into in two international instruments, the oldest of which will complete its twentieth anniversary this year. By the same token, we regard as counterproductive any procedural manoeuvres which may result in preventing the CTB Working Group from tackling right away the substantive issues before it.

As a country that has voluntarily forsaken its nuclear military option, Brazil stands fully behind constructive multilateral efforts to achieve progress in the priority items before this Committee, particularly those relating to nuclear disarmament. My delegation pledges its complete co-operation with you, Sir, during your tenure of the Chair, which I am persuaded will be very successful.

These are the thoughts the Brazilian delegation wished to share with the Committee as we start the fifth year of our deliberations without having succeeded, so far, in concluding a single agreement in the field of disarmament. Many speakers before me have stressed that 1983 will be a crucial year in the history of disarmament efforts. Let 1983 be the year when all members of this Committee finally realize that the purpose of this forum is not confined to producing a hard-fought yearly account of our differences of opinion. Our real responsibilities are more serious and pressing. May we all have the foresight and wisdom to live up to such responsibilities.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador de Souza e Silva for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Ahmad.

Mr. AHMAD (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, it is with very great pleasure that I welcome your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for this month. By an entirely happy coincidence, today is also the national day of Morocco and may I therefore offer you our sincerest felicitations on this occasion. Immutable ties of common faith, culture and historical experience link our two brotherly Islamic countries. As members of the Islamic Conference and other international organizations we are jointly engaged in the pursuit of the peace and prosperity of our peoples. Morocco and Pakistan enjoy warm and friendly bilateral relations. We have a deep regard and appreciation for Morocco's important role in the search for a peaceful solution of the problems besetting our brothers in the Middle East. We have full confidence in your personal abilities which eminently qualify you to lead the Committee out of the impasse which it at present faces to a satisfactory solution.

I also wish to express our thanks and gratitude to your predecessor, the distinguished representative of Mongolia, for his determined and patient efforts in the resolution of the issues before the Committee.

It is with a sense of deep regret that I have requested the floor today to express our views on the state of affairs presently obtaining in the Committee on Disarmament. Our failure, even after a month of deliberations, to adopt the agenda for 1983 is indicative of the crisis which faces the Committee.

Over the years we have had reason and occasion to regret and even deplore the failure of this Committee to make progress even on the items already listed on its agenda. This unenviable situation is, without doubt, the result of a singular lack of political will on the part of the major powers. The accelerating nuclear arms race between them continually deepens the sense of insecurity of the mass of humanity in the non-aligned countries. They have a feeling, much like Thomas Hardy's characters, of being pushed to an ineluctable end. A nuclear war for which the nuclear-weapon States are daily augmenting their capability and preparedness, will be an unprecedented catastrophe. It is this impending danger, coupled with the complete failure of the efforts to commence negotiations on the entire range of nuclear disarmament issues, which gives relevance and urgency to the proposal for the inscription of "Prevention of nuclear war" as a new item on the agenda of the Committee. It is only after serious consideration of all aspects of the proposal that we have given it our full support. As I stated in my intervention on 15 February, "we are not unmindful of the different views and perceptions in this respect. On the contrary, we believe that the scope of the item admits their full consideration.

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An out-of-hand rejection of this important proposal will justifiably draw charges of a myopic outlook and a parochial attitude. An open discussion of security compulsions and strategic planning will afford members of this Committee an opportunity to focus on the root causes of a possible nuclear war". It was our hope that an attitude of understanding and accommodation would similarly govern the judgement of all other delegations. We are, however; surprised that some delegations are not ready to allow the inscription of the item on the agenda. In our opinion they are not in tune with the requirements of our times. The resulting stalemate in the Committee is entirely of their making.

The members of the major military alliances represented in this Committee can perhaps interpret and accept the impasse as evidence of the state of relations between them and, more fundamentally, representative of the conflict in their respective jealously guarded security interests. For the group of non-aligned countries, however, this situation has other serious implications.

First, we are convinced that this manifest display of mutual distrust and lack of confidence in an important forum like the Committee on Disarmament contributes only to the further deterioration of the international political climate. We all have a vital stake in the continued maintenance of universal peace and security as a natural prerequisite to development and progress.

Secondly, the present impasse represents an unacceptable slide in the commitment of the major powers to the indispensable role of the Committee as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. The refusal to involve the Committee in negotiations of critically important disarmament and security issues calls into question the value of international commitments which serve as a basis for the collective security system afforded by the United Nations.

The third and certainly the most important aspect of the problem facing the Committee is the lack of any consideration for the security concerns of the non-aligned countries. The obstacles to the inscription of the item "Prevention of nuclear war" are rooted, as I have already mentioned, in the security perceptions of the opposing military camps. No one questions the supreme importance each country accords to the dictates of its own national security. We have no dispute with this basic principle. What is important, however, is the singular disregard for the security of the non-aligned countries which is manifest in the operational thesis of the security doctrines which envisage the use of nuclear weapons at any stage. Non-aligned countries have an equal right to security which cannot be jeopardized or even ignored in the context of the security of other nations. Only last week the international press quoted Mr. Volker Ruehre, the deputy parliamentary floor leader in the

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Bundestag as saying, "Naturally we respect the security needs of the Soviet Union, but we refuse to let Soviet security be based on our insecurity". This is fair reasoning. We expect the major powers to judge and respect the security needs of the non-aligned countries in the same spirit and by the same standards. The reluctance to permit the inclusion of "Prevention of nuclear war" on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament, as indeed also the opposition to substantive negotiations on this as well as other items of high priority, are hardly indicative of the acceptance of the principle of justice. As a non-aligned country we cannot hide our feelings of deep concern and disappointment in this regard.

The item "Prevention of nuclear war" constitutes a non-partisan and a neutral proposal. In seeking to preclude the use of nuclear weapons it does not sanction or legitimize a conventional attack. On the contrary, its scope is inclusive of an inquiry into any use or threat of use of force in contravention of the principles of the United Nations Charter. Then why should anyone take exception? This is not to provide ground for the deduction that the wording of the item is dispensable. Quite the contrary; this wording has for long been used in United Nations resolutions for its clarity and sharp focus on the core of the threat to the survival of mankind. The formulation does not even suggest an a priori rejection of the doctrine of deterrence, nor does it prevent full consideration being given to the underlying basis of the concept of deterrence. No group of countries should, therefore, be at a particular disadvantage by an open and fair discussion of the necessity for the prevention of a nuclear war and the adoption of practical measures to avert it. The urgency inherent in this danger and the specificity of the threat were admitted openly in the statements of various delegations last week. There appears to be only a psychological barrier to the acceptance of the wording which is born of a misconception about the eventual nature of the negotiations.

Disappointment has been expressed about the lack of concrete details in document CD/341 on the practical measures to be adopted for the prevention of a nuclear war. In our view, a precise enumeration of these measures would prejudice and perhaps limit the parameters and the scope of this item, which should in all fairness be negotiated by all delegations in a working group. The flexibility built into the proposal of the Group of 21 is clearly indicative of the non-controversial and non-partisan basis of the proposal, which should help in its correct understanding and acceptance.

Our present difficulties on the agenda have resulted in wastage of the Committee's valuable time at an important juncture. The Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban is awaiting reformulation of its mandate so that it can begin negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We hope that differences on this issue will not result in a fresh impasse. An accommodating attitude on all

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sides will be necessary to forestall this possibility. The Soviet delegation has tabled draft "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests". This is a valuable initiative which, inter alia, provides a constructive basis for the commencement of negotiations on a CTBT. The issue of a nuclear test ban can no longer be subjected to hesitation and procrastination.

Pakistan, along with Argentina, Australia, China and Indonesia, has long stressed the necessity of including the prohibition of use in the proposed convention on chemical weapons. It is a matter of satisfaction to us that the Soviet Union, in recognition of its concrete value, has accepted this proposal. The significance of this policy decision will not be lost on anyone. It is our hope that other countries will give serious consideration to a general acceptance of the inclusion of the prohibition of use. It will mark the end of controversy in one important area of the convention.

The United States delegation has also taken a positive initiative in tabling its detailed views on a chemical weapons convention. Provision has been made for the international supervision of chemical weapons stocks found after the declarations have been made. We have always advocated international control of all stocks and facilities following the convention's entry into force. Chemical weapons stocks declared at the time of the entry into force of the convention or found afterwards will equally jeopardize the continued faithful adherence to the convention until these are destroyed. The acceptance of the prohibition of their use by the convention sharply brings our proposal into focus. It is also a natural corollary to the British proposal that chemical weapons production facilities should be sealed and internationally supervised within six months after the convention comes into force.

Finally, the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament has held a general exchange of views to clear the atmosphere and establish a mutually agreed basis for the resumption of work. I regret to say that our delegation has not been greatly encouraged. We continue to face conceptual difficulties on the framework and the scope of the comprehensive programme. The severity of the divergences cuts deep into the clear and unambiguous commitments enshrined in the Final Document. Unless we are all prepared to display a more forthcoming and constructive approach towards the comprehensive programme of disarmament, we shall not be able to complete our work by the end of the year. To be fruitful, the exercise must be started in real earnest.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Ahmad for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the German Democratic Republic, Ambassador Herder.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Mr. Chairman, allow me at the beginning of my statement today, to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of March and also on the national day your country is celebrating today. We are confident that your diplomatic skill and experience will be of great importance in solving the difficult tasks before you. May I assure you of our determination to continue working in a constructive and flexible spirit in order to achieve tangible results.

May I also, through you, Mr. Chairman, express once again our thanks and appreciation to Ambassador Erdembileg for the effective and dedicated manner in which he guided our Committee through the first month of its 1983 session.

My delegation deeply regrets that so far it has not been possible to achieve consensus on the inclusion of an item on the prevention of nuclear war in our agenda and to establish a corresponding working group. We are firmly convinced that all efforts must be undertaken in this Committee to tackle the issues connected with the prevention of nuclear war on a priority basis.

Efforts to agree on concrete measures to avert the danger of nuclear war and to reduce the risk of military confrontation are part and parcel of the foreign policy of the German Democratic Republic aimed at creating and maintaining such external conditions as are favourable for the peaceful development of my country.

Guided by this the German Democratic Republic, after the recent Prague summit meeting of the Warsaw Treaty member States, undertook several steps directed at improving security in Europe, which are, we believe, at the same time a contribution towards strengthening international security.

It is a particular aim of these proposals to reduce the danger of the use of weapons of mass destruction in Europe, be they nuclear or chemical weapons.

Since these proposals aroused considerable interest also in this Committee and as some concrete questions were put to my delegation during the last weeks, we would like at this point to elaborate our approach in this regard.

The German Democratic Republic welcomed and supported the Swedish proposal to set up a zone free from battlefield nuclear weapons along the dividing line between the two military alliances in Europe. In addition, we suggested extending the range of the proposed zone and declared our readiness to include, on the basis of the principle of equality and equal security, the entire territory of the German Democratic Republic in such a zone.

Following the response of the German Democratic Republic in a note to the Swedish Government, the head of State of my country, Erich Honecker, on 4 February 1983 informed the Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany of our positive reaction. In this letter, Erich Honecker emphasized that "proceeding from the importance of the Swedish initiative as well as the responsibility of the two German States for peace and the concomitant obligation to

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assist actively in preventing a nuclear catastrophe, it would be of great significance if the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany also supported this initiative". My delegation has today requested the circulation of both papers as official documents of the Committee on Disarmament.

In our support for the setting up of such a zone we proceed from the conviction that such a nuclear-weapon-free zone would, in fact, help prevent nuclear war. It would be an important confidence-building measure and enhance the security of all parties concerned. Reducing the danger of a nuclear war breaking out at the borderline between the two major military alliances, it would also provide new impetus to détente and co-operation, and facilitate disarmament negotiations at various levels. In view of everything which is happening, however, it seems to be a strange logic to deny the dangerous effects the stationing of nuclear weapons inevitably has. In the event of a conflict, such weapons might be compared with a magnet, inviting a counter-strike. Therefore, the elimination of battlefield nuclear weapons in a broad area along the dividing line between the NATO and Warsaw Treaty countries would definitely reduce the danger of nuclear weapons ever being used there. It will make peace more secure and not only in Europe.

It will come as no surprise to anyone that my country, the western neighbour of which is known as the country having the highest concentration of nuclear weapons on its territory, attaches special importance to the creation of such a zone. At the same time, the German Democratic Republic welcomes the fact that other European countries too, among them the socialist countries, have expressed their support for the Swedish initiative.

We are also very much encouraged by the broad support the idea of a nuclear-weapon-free zone received in international public opinion in Europe and elsewhere. As you know from recent statements, for the time being the proposal has not received the constructive response it deserves from the governments of some NATO member States, among them our western neighbour. This, of course, will not be considered by us to mean, that the proposal is off the table.

On the contrary, it should be firmly inscribed on the agenda of co-operative efforts for ensuring peace and security in Europe and the world. There is no question that its implementation will need time and, there is no doubt, the political will of all sides concerned.

In this connection, the head of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, stated on 13 February that we are not under the illusion that the objective of creating a nuclear-weapon-free Europe, supported by the German Democratic Republic with all the means at its disposal, can be achieved overnight, so to speak. This does not relieve us from the duty, however, to work step by step in order to free Europe eventually from nuclear weapons.

Notwithstanding the problems connected with the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, all efforts should be undertaken to tackle the issue seriously. A rejection out of hand, however, will raise grave doubts. One might ask whether such an action was determined by the aim of facilitating the deployment of new foreign nuclear weapons on one's own territory and getting people used to the idea.

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Here, again, we would like to draw attention to working paper CD/256, which emphasized that "it is up to the national authorities of non-nuclear-weapon States to take a sovereign decision on whether to accept nuclear weapons on their territories or not".

There is no possibility of escaping this heavy responsibility. This cannot be done by hiding behind the smoke-screen of the ill-famed "zero option". In the course of our debate, my delegation has already had an opportunity to explain its position on this idea, which is neither a genuine option nor a proposal aimed at "zero" nuclear weapons. Today, it is clear to practically everybody that to support it means to support the deployment of new American missiles in western Europe.

Therefore we believe that the recent negative responses to proposals for setting up the nuclear-weapon-free zone mentioned above, as well as a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe, cannot and will not be the last word. People are waiting for constructive action, but not for out-of-hand rejections. At a later stage of our debate, my delegation will offer further considerations in this regard.

In its statement on 8 February, my delegation outlined its basic approach to one of the most important issues before this Committee -- a comprehensive test ban. Today we would like to elaborate on some current questions with regard to such a ban.

In three resolutions, the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session stressed the urgent necessity of a complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. But in fact only one nuclear-weapon State -- the Soviet Union -- gave a clear and constructive answer to the call by almost all United Nations Member countries. As a concrete proof of this attitude, my delegation welcomes the "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests" which were submitted and explained in the Committee on Disarmament by the Soviet delegation on 17 February.

At the same time, other nuclear-weapon States seem to be more concerned with involving this Committee in endless and futile discussions. Their aim obviously is to cover up their lack of readiness quickly to conclude a CTBT.

My delegation by no means underestimates the role of verification in a CTBT as well as in other measures in the disarmament field. We regard verification as a means to an end -- to provide confidence that the treaty obligations are being honoured by all parties. Yet we cannot subscribe to an approach which seems to look upon verification as an end in itself and which puts discussions on verification into the centre of disarmament negotiations. Such an approach would, as was rightly stated in last year's report of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, amount to the "danger that, as in the past, the question of verification would be used as a smoke-screen to cover up the lack of political will and delay indefinitely the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty".

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Statements delivered in the Committee during the past month have shown that with regard to CTB verification, two different approaches still exist in this Committee.

Firstly, the overwhelming majority of members of the Committee advocate a sound and balanced verification system, for which all the necessary technical prerequisites exist. The practical arrangements for setting up such a verification system should be elaborated in the course of and as part and parcel of actual treaty negotiations.

Secondly, some other countries are asking us to concentrate our efforts on a priority discussion of verification questions, while CTB negotiations themselves should be a "long-term goal". Sometimes it is proposed to put certain key elements of a verification system into place, even if there is no chance of having a treaty proper in the foreseeable future.

My delegation adheres to the first approach. We would like to see this Committee take up its negotiating role with regard to a CTBT as soon as possible. Therefore, we advocate that the relevant working group should be provided with a new, extended mandate. In document CD/259 my delegation made a specific proposal in this regard.

Last year, when we joined the consensus on the limited mandate for the nuclear test-ban Working Group, it was our aim to explore all possibilities which could promote the commencement of real negotiations.

As a matter of fact, the Working Group held rather interesting discussions on questions connected with the verification of compliance with a comprehensive test ban. Unfortunately, not all sides contributed actively to the work of this Group. In particular, those delegations which had originally proposed its limited mandate took a reluctant attitude and refrained from submitting constructive proposals. Now it is high time for the group to deal with all aspects of a comprehensive test ban, since verification questions can only be solved if it is known to what scope of prohibition the verification system should apply. Thus, it cannot be the aim to discuss verification per se, but to elaborate a treaty containing, of course, pertinent verification provisions. This assessment was corroborated by the work of the Group last year. Even the proponents of the limited mandate seemed to recognize the senselessness of a mere verification debate when they stated in the report of the Group that "in their opinion, a determination of adequacy involved a whole complex of issues and was a matter for political decision by each Government in the light of its national requirements and the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was called for".

In the view of my delegation, this statement leads to two conclusions:

Firstly, the countries which, on the one hand, asked for a verification debate, opposed, on the other hand, a substantive discussion and were not ready to provide ideas on an "adequate" verification system.

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Secondly, referring to the "time the decision was called for", they made clear that as long as a CTB is for them only a long-term goal they might use verification discussions to fill the credibility gap created by their negative attitude towards a CTB.

The conclusion for the 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament can only be to proceed to actual negotiations, to give the Working Group an appropriate mandate and to waste no more time on abstract discussions. This view was clearly expressed by the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States in resolution 37/72. Moreover, resolution 37/78 G on the "Report of the Committee on Disarmament" contains an explicit appeal to the Committee to provide all working groups with negotiating mandates. Now, the Committee should act accordingly. This view has been shared in the Committee by the socialist countries as well as by many other members, including Mexico, India, Algeria, Burma, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Some words about the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts. My delegation highly appreciates the work of this Group which should promote the establishment of an international system for the exchange of seismic data to contribute to verification of a CTBT. Having this useful role of the Group in mind, and taking into account the propitious circumstances for a CTB prevailing at that time, my country sent an expert to the Group in 1977 and the years there after. Obviously, this situation has changed. After one major nuclear-weapon State had declared a CTB a "long-term goal", a tendency became apparent in the Group of Scientific Experts endlessly to prolong the work of the Group by bringing in ever newer technical issues. So one might ask if here again technical questions are not being used to cover the lack of political will to achieve an agreement.

In our view, the two reports tabled by the Group in recent years (CCD/558 and CD/43) contain sufficiently clear ideas on the establishment of an international system for the exchange of seismic data. We hope that the forthcoming third report will provide further concretization in this regard.

So, there is enough material for setting up the international data exchange system within the framework of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and I underline "a treaty". The Group of Scientific Experts should contribute to such a treaty. It does not work in an "ivory tower", neither should its work be regarded as an exercise in "art for art's sake". It is the purpose that counts. Consequently, we have grave doubts as to the seriousness of an approach asking us to proceed indefinitely with the work of the Group while no treaty negotiations are taking place.

For how many years is the Group of Scientific Experts going to try to keep pace with quickly developing technology instead of elaborating the system necessary for a CTBT? It is the belief of my delegation that the Committee on Disarmament should carefully consider the future of the Group after the submission of its third report.

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In conclusion, allow me to offer a few suggestions, which I will make in my capacity as co-ordinator of the group of socialist countries for the month of March. At one of our recent plenary meetings my predecessor as co-ordinator, Ambassador Kömives, the distinguished representative of Hungary, has already expressed the great concern of the group of socialist countries that owing to the negative attitude of the group of Western countries it has not been possible so far to adopt the Committee's agenda and to solve the other organizational questions. At the latest meeting of the group of socialist countries, we again assessed the present situation and decided to submit new, constructive proposals to enable us to proceed to substantive negotiations in the Committee without losing any more time.

We accordingly submit the following concrete proposals:

1. Considering that with regard to item 4 of the proposed agenda, on "Chemical weapons", as far as we know no objections have been raised by any delegation regarding the formulation of the item itself or of the mandate for the relevant Working Group, the group of socialist countries proposes that the regular activities of this Working Group be resumed immediately, starting from 7 March 1983.

2. Considering that with regard to the chairmanship of the working groups there continue to be differences of opinion, our group suggests that we proceed in accordance with one of the following alternatives:

(a) Continue in the Working Group on Chemical Weapons with a chairman from a socialist country as in 1982, following the principle of continuity for the chairmanships of working groups;

(b) Extend temporarily the chairmanship of the chemical weapons Working Group by a representative from the socialist group, until consensus has been achieved on the chairmanships of all working groups set up for the 1983 session on the basis of the principle of rotation;

(c) Apply the principle of rotation for the chairmanship of the chemical weapons Working Group on a weekly basis among the three principal groups in the Committee, until the question of the number of working groups this year and of the principle for the distribution of the chairmanships of all working groups has finally been resolved; or

(d) Appoint the Chairman of the Committee for the month of March as temporary Chairman of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons and settle the question of the chairmanship of the Working Group during the period of his mandate, taking into account the distribution of chairmanships in the other groups.

We are submitting these alternative proposals for the Committee's consideration. At the same time, the group of socialist countries is prepared to consider other possible solutions, which would not violate the legitimate interests of the principal groups in the Committee. For us, the main thing is to continue immediately the useful negotiations taken up last year and continued early this year under the guidance of the Polish representative.

The socialist group requests you, Mr. Chairman, to conduct consultations immediately in order to solve this question and to resume the activities of the chemical weapons Working Group starting next Monday.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Herder for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Burma, Ambassador Maung Maung Gyi.

Mr. MAUNG MAUNG GYI (Burma): Mr. Chairman, before I venture to make my prepared statement, I just want to say that my statement is concise enough to finish before the hour of 1 o'clock. It concerns one of the pressing issues that is under consideration, which is, "Prevention of nuclear war".

My delegation welcomes your tenure of the chairmanship for this month. There is no doubt that you have a challenging month ahead of you, for despite the considerable efforts of your predecessor, this Committee has still to draw up an agenda and an agreed programme of work. It is our earnest hope that the experience and diplomatic skill which you have at your disposal will stand you in good stead for the successful resolution of this issue. At the same time, I should also like to express on my delegation's behalf to the distinguished representative of the delegation of Mongolia, our appreciation for the tact and skill with which he has chaired this Committee and the untiring efforts he has made to overcome procedural difficulties.

Despite the endeavours made by your predecessor this Committee, after a month of deliberations, is still faced with the situation of having to conduct its work without an agenda and we therefore hope that we shall be able to overcome this impasse under your chairmanship. Despite the lack of an agenda, the rules of procedure have given us a certain measure of flexibility which has made it possible to discuss any subject which any delegation may wish to discuss. We cannot therefore say that our work in the plenary is at a standstill for useful exchanges of views have taken place, particularly with regard to chemical weapons. However, we cannot help noticing that a sense of drift has crept into our work in the plenary owing to the lack of a structured programme of work, and that we have not as yet been able to commence the work of the working groups with the exception of that concerned with a comprehensive programme of disarmament. It is therefore necessary to intensify our efforts, taking into account the principles on the basis of which this Committee was constituted by the General Assembly at its first special session devoted to disarmament. These principles are embodied in paragraph 120 of the Final Document, and I refer in particular to subparagraph (e) which states that the Committee should "Adopt its own agenda taking into account the recommendations made to it by the General Assembly and the proposals presented by the members of the Committee". In this connection, I wish to refer to the working paper on prevention of nuclear war presented on 4 February by the Group of 21 in accordance with resolution 37/78 I of the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly which gave a specific mandate to this Committee "to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war". The Final Document explicitly stressed the importance of the prevention of nuclear war, and what we are now proposing is to fill in the missing element on our agenda.

Paragraph 18 of the Final Document states that "Removing the threat of a world war — a nuclear war — is the most acute and urgent task of the present day". As to the measures necessary for removing such a threat, paragraph 20 states: "Among such measures, effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority".

(Mr. Maung Maung Gyi, Burma)

So long as nuclear weapons continue to exist in the arsenals of States, the threat of a nuclear war will always be with us, and it does not appear possible to remove this threat entirely until nuclear weapons have been completely eliminated. There is no doubt that the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament deserve the highest priority. Efforts to reduce nuclear weapons have been going on for the greater part of our lifetime, and despite such efforts the nuclear arms race continues with a growing momentum. Therefore, in tandem with efforts on nuclear disarmament, our efforts should also be focused on specific measures designed to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war. May I, in this context, quote what the relevant part of paragraph 20 of the Final Document states namely: "To this end, it is imperative to remove the threat of nuclear weapons, to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race until the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems has been achieved, and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, other measures designed to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war and to lessen the danger of the threat or use of nuclear weapons should be taken". Our interpretation of these wordings from the Final Document is that in addition to nuclear disarmament measures it is necessary to focus our efforts on specific measures which will constitute safeguards for the prevention of a nuclear war.

At our plenary meeting on 28 February, certain comments were made on the Group of 21 working paper to the effect that it is vague and does not specify exactly what kind of measures the Group has in mind. In my delegation's view, and I am sure other members of the Group of 21 will agree with me, in presenting this paper its authors did not wish to assert their reconceptions. The working paper merely stated that the prevention of nuclear war should be included as an item on the agenda. It is therefore a fair and reasonable proposal since it does not prejudge the issue. Is it too much to ask that this Committee consider an issue that concerns the very survival of mankind without any preconditions whatsoever?

We are apprehensive that if the consideration of nuclear war prevention is linked to the consideration of conventional wars, this would diffuse our objective and would lead us into a labyrinth of discussions that would get us nowhere. There is a thinking that in order to prevent nuclear wars, it is necessary to deal at the same time with conventional wars in general. As we understand it from the discussions at the informal meeting on 23 February, this contention is the product of a scenario which postulates the escalation of conventional wars into nuclear wars. But we should look at this issue from a much broader perspective and other possible scenarios should not be discounted. For wars can arise out of a constellation of circumstances and situations, and we cannot rule out the possibility of wars that could start with a direct recourse to the use of nuclear weapons in which conventional war is circumvented. The missile crisis of 1962 had all the possibilities of such a situation. All our efforts in this Committee are devoted to the ultimate objective which is to prevent all wars, both nuclear and conventional. But it would hardly seem possible to banish all wars from the face of the earth until the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament has been achieved. The Charter of the United Nations contains certain provisions for the prevention of all wars. We live in a world full of imperfections, and since the Charter was adopted conventional wars have occurred and in all likelihood will continue to occur until general and complete disarmament is accomplished. It therefore appears that a more rational approach would be to concentrate our efforts on measures designed to prevent the outbreak of nuclear wars, which of course does not preclude those that are likely to originate from conventional wars.

(Mr. Maung Maung Gyi, Burma)

In my statement of 17 February, I said: "The blurring of the distinction between conventional wars and nuclear wars is also a recent phenomenon which undermines the established concepts of disarmament. Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass genocide and the totality of their use could spell the ultimate disaster for mankind. Therefore, the morality and rationality of the need to draw a fundamental distinction between wars of a conventional nature and nuclear wars should not be placed in doubt". It is therefore axiomatic that we should recognize the fundamental need to consider the prevention of nuclear war per se.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Maung Maung Gyi for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

I have no further speakers on my list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): In part of my statement of 24 February, I attempted to demonstrate the logical deficiencies and the irrelevance in arms control terms of some recent proposals aiming at the establishment of geographically very limited zones free of certain types of weapons. I also showed that these proposals are far from meeting the basic requirements spelled out in the Final Document for the establishment of zones free of certain types of weapons. Today Ambassador Herder of the German Democratic Republic has tried to revive some of the concepts. To my disappointment he did not enter into the argumentative debate on the subject which I had initiated. It is, of course, his good right merely to repeat the proposals which his Government has made or endorses but I wonder to what extent it is useful to have such repetition in the face of arguments which are already on the table and, as far as my arguments go, I would like to modestly recall them. Ambassador Herder has also requested the circulation of two documents containing views of his Government in this context. I think it would be useful for delegates to have the full dossier in front of them. I would therefore like to request that the reply which Chancellor Helmut Kohl gave to Mr. Honecker, the Secretary-General of the East German Communist Party, should also be circulated as a document of the Committee, to be issued in close temporal succession.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): I do not want to enter now into an exchange of views -- I certainly could do so. You know me long enough to conclude that I would be in a position to do so, but I think you are clever enough and experienced enough to make your own judgement on the basis of the documents which have been submitted -- as I have tried to explain to you.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Do any other delegations wish to take the floor? I see that there are none. My dear colleagues, you will no doubt remember that at our last plenary meeting I informed the Committee of my intention to continue my consultations concerning the agenda and programme of work as well as other organizational matters. Immediately after the last plenary meeting I had a very useful meeting with the co-ordinators of the groups. I should like to convene another meeting with the co-ordinators for a further exchange of views on the questions in suspense tomorrow, Friday, 4 March, at 11 a.m. in Conference Room No. I. I should also like to say that any other delegations wishing to take part in these discussions will be welcome.

The next plenary of the Committee on Disarmament will be held on