

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 16 July 1987 at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. T. Terrefe

(Ethiopia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 422nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

To begin with, I should like to welcome, on behalf of the Conference, a distinguished visitor: we have among us today the Director-General of International Security and Disarmament Affairs of Spain, Ambassador Carlos Miranda, who is addressing the Conference at this plenary meeting. This is his first visit to the multilateral disarmament negotiating body since he took up his important functions and I wish to thank him for the interest that he shows in our work.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference will continue its consideration of agenda item 4, entitled "Chemical weapons". In accordance with Rule 30 of its Rules of Procedure however, any member wishing to do so may take the floor on any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Spain and Mexico. I have pleasure in giving the floor to the first speaker, the Director-General of International Security and Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Carlos Miranda.

Mr. CARLOS MIRANDA Y ELIO (Spain) (translated from Spanish):
Mr. President, first of all I should like to thank you both for the very warm welcome just extended to me and for this opportunity to speak in this Council chamber dedicated to the Spaniard Francisco de Vittoria. Permit me to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Conference on Disarmament for this month and to express the hope that under your expert guidance we can continue making progress towards our common objectives. At this Conference, observer delegations generally do not speak in the plenary as frequently as its members and we lack the opportunity to greet and congratulate all the distinguished persons who have occupied or will be occupying the Chair during the many months in the year that it meets; permit me, therefore, to express my gratitude for the efforts of your predecessors in the Chair and to pledge our full co-operation to your successors.

Not long ago, the Spanish observer at this Conference, Ambassador Laclea, announced the decision of the Spanish Government to take the necessary steps for Spain to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty; at that time reference was made to the Spanish Government's security and disarmament policy. I have the pleasure to be in your midst today precisely for the purpose of setting forth, albeit briefly, our views on this subject in the context of the items appearing in the programme of work of this Conference. I am pleased to be doing so at a time when the disarmament process seems to be receiving a truly important impetus in the bilateral negotiations between the two major military Powers of our age and when there is also a chance of this Conference entering the final phase of a new and very necessary multilateral contribution aimed at achieving the elimination from the face of the Earth of an entire category of extremely cruel weapons of mass destruction -- chemical weapons.

Spain's interest in, and concern with disarmament problems -- which are of long standing -- have been given new impetus in the past few years through a series of measures of which at this time I shall, at the risk of being

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immodest, mention only one, that is the establishment of the newest General Directorate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the General Directorate of International Security and Disarmament Affairs, which I have the honour and responsibility to head.

Security and disarmament are intimately linked. Thus, while it is true that disarmament which is balanced in its results and achieved through agreements compliance with which can be rapidly and effectively verified must help to enhance security, it is also true that we cannot progress on disarmament at the sacrifice of the necessary security, that is, the possibility of defence in case of attack, or the capacity to deter a potential aggressor.

According to paragraph 19 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, our ultimate objective is general and complete disarmament under effective international control. But until it becomes possible to reach that ultimate objective, arms limitation and reduction agreements can, and must, prevent arms races by maintaining security at the lowest possible level of armaments and in an equilibrium deterring all tendency to aggression. Since the end of the Second World War the balancing capacity of nuclear weapons seems to have guaranteed that deterrence, since the surplus of power of those weapons and their capacity to generate a threat of total destruction are what enable us to dispense with determining other, far more delicate balances.

But the highest authorities of the two major military Powers of our time, General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan, declared in November 1985, in this very city, that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought. We must draw the conclusions that follow from that assertion, which we all share: we must make that war impossible and the only way to make it impossible is, ultimately, the disappearance of nuclear weapons.

Now then, on the path leading towards that goal it is necessary to bear in mind the essential considerations of balance and security. This can only be achieved in a gradual process that takes account not only of nuclear weapons, but also of all other weapons, including chemical weapons, and conventional weapons, within the context of global consideration of that balance and, obviously, bearing in mind the fact that the equalizing factor should in principle not be an increase in the strength of the party that is at a disadvantage at a given time or in a given category of weapons, but rather a reduction in principle of the forces of the party that is in the situation of superiority.

In this respect, it must be pointed out that the term "balance" does not of itself ensure security or peace. A "balance", be it nuclear or conventional, at the high levels of forces that are now current and without having proceeded to the elimination of all possibility of a surprise or mass attack is not enough. That is why this term has to be qualified, complemented by the expression "at lower levels of forces". It is then when we reach conventional stability at lower levels, with no possibility of mass or surprise attacks, that nuclear armaments will begin to lose their meaning. If we want, and I think we do want, to make progress in the nuclear disarmament process, we must also strive to make progress in the conventional field.

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In this connection, I should like to refer for a moment, to the informal and exploratory discussions for the drawing up of a mandate on conventional stability that are currently taking place in Vienna between 23 countries of those participating in the CSCE process. These discussions must be viewed in the light of the context of the process that began with the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, and of the adoption at the Stockholm Conference in 1986 of a whole series of measures to enhance security and confidence. May I be permitted here to point to the essential link between the confidence represented by these measures and the discussions, which have as their final goal the adoption of disarmament measures: without a minimum basis of prior confidence, it is unthinkable to make progress in the field of disarmament proper. As regards the discussions to which I am referring, I should like to emphasize that they involve the 23 States which, in view of the existence of two political-military alliances, undoubtedly have major responsibility in the matters affecting the security of this continent. Last Friday, 3 July, Portugal submitted a proposal on questions of security in the CSCE that was also sponsored by 15 other countries, among them Spain, participating in the Conference. This proposal contemplates the holding of two distinct sets of negotiations, but both within the context of the process of the CSCE: one to expand on and deepen the confidence-building measures adopted in Stockholm and possibly to adopt new such measures; the other to achieve conventional stability in Europe at lower levels of forces, and which would take place among those countries whose forces have the most immediate impact on the essential security relationship in Europe.

Let us now turn back to the subject of nuclear disarmament. In this process, the special responsibility of the major military Powers and the importance of their bilateral relations cannot be disregarded. But that reality should not lead us to conclude that the Conference on Disarmament, the multilateral negotiating body in this matter, should confine itself to awaiting the outcome of bilateral agreements between these Powers. The Conference on Disarmament has its own agenda and, without disregarding the limitations imposed on it by reality, it should face up to its own responsibilities. May I then say that in our view the Conference on Disarmament should include in its agenda all the topics appearing on its programme. At present, we are especially concerned about the fact that, except to the extent to which it is included in the comprehensive programme of disarmament -- and we should like to congratulate Ambassador García Robles for his unstinting efforts at the head of the Ad hoc Committee dealing with that programme -- the Conference on Disarmament has not studied item 4 of this programme, conventional weapons, for, despite its peculiarities in various geographical zones, conventional disarmament constitutes an essential aspect of the overall disarmament equation.

It is not just that conventional weapons are the weapons to have been used in all the armed conflicts since the end of the Second World War, and it is not just that 80 per cent of the huge sums spent on armaments throughout the world are devoted to the perfecting or procurement of conventional weapons. It is, rather, that the reduction of conventional armaments or, to put it better, a reduction in such armaments that was balanced as to its results would facilitate the reduction, or increase the possibility of our one day achieving the disappearance of nuclear weapons. And I must add that it

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was prudent and far-sighted to agree that, as paragraph 22 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament states, together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations should be carried out on the balanced reduction of armed forces and of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level -- a statement that is, moreover, confirmed in paragraphs 45 and 46, in chapter III, of the Document with regard to the Programme of Action.

The Spanish Government has repeatedly declared its intention to keep Spain as a non-nuclear country, an intention which, moreover, is in keeping with a popular decision expressed through a referendum. So far Spain has been a non-nuclear country de facto. Soon now, before the end of this year, with the deposit of the instrument of Spain's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, concerning which the Government already has the unanimous approval of Congress and matters are in hand for the Senate to give its approval after the summer, once the parliamentary recess is over, when we will then deposit this instrument of accession, our country will renounce in international law the acquisition of nuclear weapons. That will also strengthen the ban, which was approved by the referendum of 12 March 1986, on the installation, stockpiling or introduction of nuclear weapons within Spanish territory and will dispel all possible suspicion that Spain has not renounced turning itself into a nuclear Power. In this connection, I should like to add that Spain hopes that in this field it will be subject to the same régime as the non-nuclear countries of the European Community that are parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

With reference to the first item on the agenda of this Conference, it cannot be a surprise to anyone that my country, which is a contracting party to the Treaty on the partial prohibition of nuclear tests, is also decisively in favour of the conclusion of a treaty totally banning nuclear tests. In keeping with that desire, we are pleased at the successive Soviet moratoria and we regret their recent interruption.

We also regret that this Conference has not yet been able to establish an ad hoc committee entrusted with considering in all their aspects the banning of nuclear tests and the problems of verification involved in the total prohibition as well as in the limitation of testing. On the other hand, it is with great interest and hope that we are following the current negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which, we hope, will pave the way for a gradual advance towards the final objective through the acceptance of a progressive reduction of the number and yield of the tests carried out.

It is obvious that there is also a link between the implementation of certain nuclear tests and the fact that these weapons remain an element of deterrence. I have referred to this matter before and I must point out that my Government is aware of the role played by nuclear weapons, but at the same time we also believe that that deterrence can be maintained and general strategic stability can be improved by undertaking gradual, significant, balanced and verifiable reductions in the nuclear weapons currently deployed and that as a first step towards the ultimate goal of their final elimination.

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Consequently, it is with great hopes that we view the development of the negotiating process between the United States and the Soviet Union that is taking place here in Geneva and will, we hope, because we consider success is necessary, enable the medium-range nuclear missiles deployed in Europe to be eliminated rapidly and, if that is possible and, in addition, desirable -- because it is -- totally, without any missile of that description remaining in the Asian part of the USSR or in the United States. Similarly, it is necessary to realize the prospects that exist for a 50 per cent reduction of Soviet and United States strategic nuclear arsenals by signing a treaty to this end as soon as possible. We mean that both things should, if possible, be signed this year.

So far I have referred to matters relating to items 1, 2 and 8 of the Conference's agenda. I shall add a few words in the context of item 3, for the consideration of which, as of items 1 and 2, it has not yet been possible to establish an ad hoc committee, something we regret because item 3 also deserves special development. It is true that the prevention of nuclear war appears to be a broad question and one related moreover to the cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear testing, but it also has other specific facets. In our view, it is hardly conceivable that a war could be exclusively nuclear from the outset -- except in the case, which unfortunately cannot be ruled out, of a war that began accidentally: the degree of sophistication of the systems involved and the brief span of time that would be left for direct intervention by officials make it impossible to discard that hypothesis. In any case, we are convinced that the best way to prevent nuclear war is to forestall, to prevent all war. Once again, we see the inescapable link between nuclear and conventional armaments and the danger there would be in the beginning of a conventional war between nuclear Powers that could turn into a nuclear conflict of universal consequences.

I am pleased to express our satisfaction at the progress now being achieved in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. It is well known that Spain does not possess such weapons today and does not wish to possess them and that it is in favour of the completion as soon as possible of a treaty prohibiting not only the use but also the development, production and stockpiling of these weapons and imposing the destruction of those that already exist.

The 1925 Protocol, to which Spain is a contracting party and which meant a large step in the right direction, none the less reserves the possibility of possessing chemical weapons and the legitimacy of their use as a reprisal. And, although these arms were not used in the Second World War, we have seen with indignation that they have been used in other conflicts, and especially in the conflict raging today between Iraq and Iran. Consequently, only the radical prohibition of the manufacture and possession of these weapons will be an absolute guarantee of the impossibility of their use. Of course, a treaty of this kind requires in its turn rigorous procedures for verifying that its terms are being respected by all its parties and also requires universal participation and, first and foremost, the participation of the great military Powers.

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Consequently, my country is in favour of rapid, effective and sure verification systems and we believe that the necessary efforts should be made to resolve the greatest problem still outstanding: in our view, the problem of challenge inspection, whether in the case of chemical weapons storage facilities or in the case of production facilities. We welcome the favourable disposition that has been shown in the area of principles and we hope that it will swiftly be transformed into texts that will ensure the necessary rapidity and effectiveness in the functioning of this final "safety net" in the implementation of the future convention. We continue to believe that the proposal by the United Kingdom in document CD/715 provides an excellent basis for this work.

As you know, our delegation is participating actively to that end in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, where, of course it is still necessary to resolve other detailed questions, such as those of the schedules of chemicals to be subject to various verification procedures, the declaration of arsenals, obsolete weapons, the order of destruction, the institutional systems, and also the sanctions or measures to be adopted in the event of proven violations of the future convention. And I should like to stress that, if the possibility of reprisals is excluded, it will be essential to guarantee absolutely that the convention will be respected.

In connection with the order of destruction of existing chemical weapons, the Spanish delegation has submitted a working paper whose purpose is to achieve a reduction through "equal gradients of risk" of each chemical in each annual destruction period, taking as a basis for computation the median lethal dose or the median incapacitating dose, which are the most significant parameters in the military utilization of chemical weapons. On that basis, the equivalent masses of risk of each chemical can be determined, which enables a comparison to be made of the chemicals to be destroyed, or the substances to be replaced when that is necessary because of imperatives relating to the handling of stocks, the capacity of the destruction facility, or any other considerations, including political considerations, that make it advisable to have a solid basis of comparison. Our proposal is compatible with others and we would be prepared to study any combinations capable of yielding the desired result. However, we must point out as of now that we do not deem it desirable to establish provisions designed to permit, even temporarily, chemical rearmament in order to achieve a new equilibrium which today does not exist or provisions that would imply an invitation to countries which today do not possess chemical weapons to acquire them.

I should now like to devote a brief comment to agenda item 5, the prevention of the arms race in outer space. In an agreement recently approved by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Parliament, it is declared that Spain advocates disarmament measures which, while preserving the necessary levels of security and stability, will reverse the arms race on Earth and prevent its extension into outer space. I am not going to discuss the question whether there are armaments deployed in outer space or not, but we do believe that there is no doubt that outer space is already being used for military purposes. In many cases, this utilization, even though it is military, has stabilizing, and hence advantageous consequences. However, we are also convinced that the legal rules applicable in outer space are inadequate to guarantee that space weapons will not be installed there.

(Mr. Carlos Miranda y Elio, Spain)

My Government has grave doubts that new systems of weapons, whether space- or Earth-based, that are designed to destroy space objects can contribute to creating greater stability or security. Much the opposite, we believe that such systems of armaments would inevitably initiate a new race, this time in space, with the consequential weakening of strategic stability. This, of course, a question where the main responsibility devolves on the two major military Powers. Spain has already expressed in other fora, and I reiterate it here, its support for the view that these two countries should comply with the ABM Treaty in the terms in which it has been interpreted so far, and that any other interpretation must be agreed by the contracting parties and be without detriment to strategic stability and security. Consequently, we are in principle opposed to any deployment of strategic defences, be they based in space or on Earth, without an agreement in this connection and without taking account of European interests.

Given the inadequacy of the existing legal order, which only specifically prohibits the deployment in space or on celestial bodies of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction, we are concerned first and foremost about the development of anti-satellite weapons and we are pleased that the United States Congress has not authorized testing of this type of weapon against real targets, and that Soviet testing in this regard has ceased. In this situation, we think that an agreement should be possible and that it is necessary to study the possible machinery for the verification of compliance with that agreement, a subject of whose difficulties we are not unaware.

We are pleased that an Ad hoc Committee has been re-established which is to complete the consideration of the diverse and difficult problems linked to the necessity of preventing an arms race in outer space. Likewise, we are pleased at the resumption of work on agenda item 6 and we have taken note with great interest of document CD/768 submitted by the distinguished delegation of Nigeria, which we believe offers an excellent basis for the discussion of the assurances that States not possessing nuclear weapons ought to obtain against the use or the threat of use of these weapons.

We are also pleased that the Ad hoc Committee dealing with agenda item 7, new types of weapons of mass destruction, that is radiological weapons, is continuing its work. On this matter I shall confine myself to saying that, in our view, the two questions at issue -- the prohibition of radiological weapons and the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities -- are very distinct questions linked only by a common characteristic, namely the consequences for human lives and the environment of the dispersion of radioactive substances. But the treaty mechanisms need to be so different that, in our opinion, the trend towards separating the study of the two items within the Ad hoc Committee is correct although that study can continue simultaneously.

I have already referred in earlier passages in my statement to the comprehensive programme for disarmament and I made what is, to our mind, a fundamental point concerning the priority items. I shall not repeat what I have already said and I shall confine myself now to expressing my hope that there will be expeditious completion of a document which should be submitted no later than the forthcoming third General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

(Mr. Carlos Miranda y Elio, Spain)

As you know, Spain does not possess nuclear weapons in its territory, neither its own nor those of third parties. Nor does it possess chemical weapons or any other type of weapon of mass destruction. In the programme of peace and security as submitted by the President of the Spanish Government to Parliament in 1984, a specific item devoted to disarmament was contemplated. Also, the interest with which the Spanish people follow subjects related to security and disarmament is great and is growing day by day, constituting in terms of the public opinion that is so important in parliamentary democracies, such as that of Spain, a considerable element in the resolve of the Spanish Government to progress in these fields.

Lastly, I should like to refer, even if only briefly, to the significant role that the Conference on Disarmament has been playing throughout its history and to the importance that Spain attaches to its work. We believe that it is precisely this importance and significance which make it advisable that States wishing to take part in its work should, as far as possible, be able to do so. In this connection, Spain hopes that the question of the forthcoming expansion, which today is blocked, will be resolved as soon as possible and it would also like to reiterate here and now, once again, its interest in becoming, and resolve to become a part of this Conference as a fully fledged member as soon as possible. Its political demographic, economic and also military importance more than warrant this aspiration.

It is true that disarmament and military deterrence are not sufficient goals to guarantee the peace and security of humanity: détente, the search for peaceful solutions to conflict and the defence of human rights are imperative needs and consequently also constitute a basic guideline in my country's foreign policy. It is true that these questions go beyond the sphere of competence of this Conference, but the contribution that the Conference can make through the adoption of agreements containing disarmament measures that are equitable, balanced in their results and verifiable is an element of vital importance to progress in the relationship between disarmament and détente, such that we can be confident that peace and security will be guaranteed to our generation and to coming generations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, my delegation subscribes with particular pleasure to the words of welcome you addressed to Mr. Carlos Miranda, the Director-General for International Security and Disarmament Affairs of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Spain. I should also like to thank Mr. Miranda for the very kind reference he has made to my modest contribution to the Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme for Disarmament.

On 3 December last year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by the overwhelming majority of 135 votes in favour resolution 41/46 A. which is entitled "Cessation of all nuclear-test explosions". In that resolution, the international community's most representative body recalled inter alia that "the complete cessation of nuclear-weapon tests, which has been examined for

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more than 30 years and on which the General Assembly has adopted more than 50 resolutions, is a basic objective of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament, to the attainment of which it has repeatedly assigned the highest priority" and stressed that "on eight different occasions it has condemned such tests in the most strongest terms" and that since 1974 it has stated its conviction that their continuation "will intensify the arms race, thus increasing the danger of nuclear war". In the same resolution the General Assembly, after reiterating "once again its grave concern that nuclear-weapon testing continues unabated, against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Member States", appealed "to all States Members of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular to the three depositary Powers of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water and of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to promote the establishment by the Conference at the beginning of its 1987 session of an ad hoc committee with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear-test explosions".

The delegation of Mexico, along with the delegations of the countries which were the most active in promoting in New York the adoption of resolution 41/46 A to which I referred a minute ago, has tried since the beginning of the work of the Conference for 1987 to implement the recommendation of the General Assembly. Regrettably, that was not possible in what we call the spring session, nor has it been possible in what there has been so far of the summer session, which is going to end very soon, as is the session for this year.

Consequently, these delegations, the delegations of Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Mexico, have decided jointly to sponsor the draft mandate which has just been circulated today and whose first paragraph faithfully reflects what was agreed by the Assembly since the Conference would, through that paragraph, establish "an Ad hoc Committee on item 1 of its agenda with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty". I shall venture to open a brief parenthesis here to say that, in the translation into Spanish of the English original of this document, which bears the symbol CD/772, a few errors have been made in paragraph 1; consequently, the secretariat is going to circulate a new version of this draft.

We venture to hope that the objective study of this draft and its comparison to those circulated between 1984 and now will highlight its constructive spirit and its flexibility, which allows for interpretations that are not in conflict with any of the points of view which can legitimately be maintained in connection with this matter, a matter to which the Assembly has quite rightly been giving the highest priority and which also takes pride of place on the agenda of our Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Is there is any other speaker who wishes to take the floor? I see none.

(The President)

I now turn to the timetable of meetings for the next week which has been circulated by the secretariat. As usual, it is merely indicative and is subject to change if necessary. Chairmen of subsidiary bodies were consulted in its preparation. If I see no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

I have one announcement to make. At the request of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, I wish to inform the Conference of a change in the announcement appearing in the timetable for this week. The meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, 17 July, at 3 p.m. will be preceded by a short meeting of the Ad hoc Committee chaired by Ambassador Meiszter and immediately afterwards the meeting of Contact Group A will be held as envisaged in the timetable. In conformity with the timetable for this week, may I recall that we shall hold immediately after this plenary meeting an informal meeting on item 2, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 21 July, at 10 a.m. This plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.