

**CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT**

ENDC/PV.412
20 May 1969
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND TWELFTH MEETING
held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 20 May 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

U KYAW MIN

(Burma)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. S.A. FRAZAO
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. M. KARASSIMEONOV
Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV

Burma:

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. V. SAFAR
Mr. J. STRUCKA

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

India:

Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCILO
Mr. F. LUCIOLI OTTIERI
Mr. R. BORSARELLI
Mr. U. PESTALOZZA

Mexico:

Miss E. AGUIRRE
Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ

Nigeria:

Mr. C.O. HOLLIST
Mr. L.A. MALIKI

Poland:

Mr. H. JAROSZEK

Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI

Mr. H. STEPOSZ

Mr. R. WLAZLO

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO

Mr. V. CONSTANTINESCO

Mr. V. TARZIORU

Mr. C. MITRAN

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL

Mr. A. EDELSTAM

Mr. S. ERICSON

Mr. U. ERICSSON

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN

Mr. O.A. GRINEVSKY

Mr. N.S. KISHILOV

Mr. V.A. DÉMENTIEV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALILAF

Mr. O. SIRRY

Mr. E.S. EL REEDY

Mr. Y. RIZK

United Kingdom:

Mr. I.F. PORTER

Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY

United States of America:

Mr. A.S. FISHER

Mr. C. GLEYSTEEN

Mr. W. GIVAN

Mr. R.L. McCORMACK

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Burma): I declare open the 412th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.
2. Mr. LAHODA (Czechoslovakia): The rather lively and factual exchanges of view which have taken place so far at our formal and informal meetings have again stressed that general and complete disarmament under strict international control continues to be the task to which all our other activities should be subordinated. That is the ultimate goal and all the steps we intend to take should be oriented towards it. The United Nations General Assembly has given us a binding directive which must be fulfilled with all its consequences. It is on that basis that individual questions included in our agenda were formulated and weighed. We must not fail in our duty to press for such partial measures as would, thanks to their content or scope, or both, bring us as close as possible to that objective.
3. From that point of view, questions relating to nuclear disarmament undoubtedly enjoy priority because they constitute the very essence of the disarmament process. In their entirety they represent the key to the gate which leads to general and complete disarmament.
4. The proposals relating to regional disarmament represent another group of measures whose achievement would, in view of their scope, make it possible for us to pass through that gate as soon as possible. Moreover, some of them -- for instance, the proposals relating to nuclear-free zones in various parts of the world -- by their very character belong to the high-priority sphere of nuclear disarmament, while others actually meet the need for total demilitarization. That is the case of the Soviet draft treaty on prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof (ENDC/240).
5. The circumstances I have just mentioned need to be constantly kept in view if we wish our efforts aimed at the creation of sound preconditions for general and complete disarmament to be ultimately successful. We believe it is precisely for those reasons that the call for a comprehensive ban of all nuclear weapon tests has met with such wide support in our Committee. That is why we so often hear about the ban on the use of nuclear weapons and their production and the ultimate liquidation of all the stockpiles of such weapons and why it is important for the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*) to enter into force as soon as possible. That is why other regions, especially in Europe, should follow the splendid example set by the establishment of the nuclear-free zone in Latin America. For the same reasons it is necessary that

total demilitarization of the sea-bed and ocean floor be applied to the largest possible area. The same line of reasoning also makes it imperative to approach the problems relating to chemical and bacteriological weapons in their entirety and to exclude those deadly means of mass infection and death once and for all from the arsenals of all States.

6. Referring to what I said at the beginning of my brief intervention, I should like to express the conviction of the Czechoslovak delegation that we have not yet exhausted all possibilities as regards, for instance, reaching an agreement on banning the use of nuclear weapons. That is an issue which has become, in a way, a household term in the world of disarmament negotiations and whose importance has been so often convincingly emphasized by various governments as well as in numerous documents emanating from international conferences. We need only remember the well-known resolution adopted at the sixteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 1653 (XVI)).

7. We feel it is high time for us to respond in an appropriate manner to the urgent pleas, urgings and exhortations contained in those documents. That is why we regard the suggestion made by the representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Roshchin, at our meeting on 10 April (ENDC/PV.402, paras. 44 - 68) as a way to break the deadlock. The Soviet delegation broached the possibility of a solution based on unilateral declarations by the respective governments expressing their willingness to assume the obligation not to use nuclear weapons as a means of aggression.

8. The Czechoslovak delegation does not regard a partial ban on the use of nuclear weapons as an optimum solution, nor as a definitive settlement of the issue. We continue to give preference to a full and unconditional prohibition. However, we should like to see progress made wherever possible and we believe that even the above-mentioned commitment would represent a contribution to our efforts aimed at increasing the feeling of security of all States, especially the non-nuclear ones. Even a partial solution of that kind would provide them with another guarantee that they would not fall prey to nuclear blackmail by nuclear Powers.

9. An important point favouring serious consideration of that modification of the ban on the use of nuclear weapons is to be found in the fact that -- as was recalled by the Soviet representative (*ibid.*, para. 62) -- a few years ago the United States and three other Western Powers expressed themselves as being in favour of a similar concept of prohibition. We have no doubt that a positive response by the United States

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

delegation to the question put by Ambassador Roshchin on 10 April (ibid., para. 65) would go a long way towards helping us to take another step in the right direction, albeit a partial one.

10. It would perhaps be appropriate to add that the grounds on which the proposal to ban the use of nuclear weapons was made in the past are well known and that so far nothing has altered their permanent validity. On the contrary, with the passage of time they are becoming ever more evident. Should it be argued that the ban on the use of nuclear weapons would merely be a formal matter and would in no way diminish the threat of nuclear war, we would need only to point to the experience gained by a similar ban on the use of weapons of mass destruction of a different kind. I have, of course, in mind chemical and bacteriological weapons and the ban on their use contained in the Geneva Protocol of 1925. The Protocol has no provisions relating to control; it does not deal with the production of weapons, nor does it consider the liquidation of the existing stockpiles of those means of warfare. That is sometimes regarded as its shortcoming. Nevertheless, not a single delegation, in the course of our discussions devoted to these problems, expressed any doubts as to the ability of that document -- which is over forty years old and perhaps imperfect in some ways -- to function in the manner intended. No one has denied that it functions as a preventive in a sphere where there are available plentiful supplies of gases and biological agents, whose employment would produce results as horrible as, if not more horrible than, those which would be visited upon mankind as a result of the use of nuclear weapons.

11. Since the ban on the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, as it exists, is rightly regarded as being useful and effective, we see no reason why the proposed ban on the use of nuclear weapons should not be judged in the same light. Moreover, note should be taken of the fact that the suggested modification of the ban would in no way affect the so-called deterrent role of nuclear weapons, to which Western Powers attach great importance.

12. We believe that mankind would be well served by an early adoption of a ban on the use of nuclear weapons not burdened by any sophisticated technical or control measures and dependent exclusively upon the goodwill and political decision of the parties concerned. It would exercise a favourable influence on a number of problems, including the concrete suggestions relating to the final solution of the problem of nuclear weapons and true nuclear disarmament. It would offer further binding guarantees against nuclear attacks and enhance the chances of building relations among States which would be based on trust. It would increase the interest in and lead to the intensification of efforts aimed at denuclearization in various parts of the world. It could not fail to be an

(Mr. Lahoda, Czechoslovakia)

encouragement to all those striving to eliminate the threat of a nuclear conflict for ever. A decision of that kind would further strengthen the trend towards settling matters under dispute by peaceful means, by way of negotiations and mutual understanding. In the opinion of my delegation, it would also be bound to have a favourable effect on the preparation and holding at an early date of the proposed conference on European security in which the largest possible number of interested States should take part. As is known, the Government of Finland has expressed its willingness to undertake the organization of such a conference.

13. My country is one of the co-authors of the appeal calling for the convocation of the conference (ENDC/243). It attaches great importance to the creation without delay of the best and most suitable conditions for the flexible preparation and the successful proceedings of, and the achievement of much-needed results from, such all-European talks, which would take place in this scope and with this composition for the first time since the end of the war. We need not go into details concerning the importance and possible consequences of an event of that kind. There is no doubt that it would offer Europe an opportunity to move from general statements concerning peace to concrete acts strengthening the security of all European countries and stimulating their all-round co-operation. In that way Europe might become a stabilizing factor for peace in the whole world. If we reach that desirable stage, we should find it easier to make progress and to act with a greater degree of determination also in discharging our own task here, thus narrowing the gap which separates us from general and complete disarmament.

14. Mr. ECOBESCO (Romania) (translation from French): The achievement of disarmament has always been and remains closely linked with the aspirations of the peoples for peace, security and progress. The recognition by humanity of the losses and sufferings inflicted by devastating conflicts and wars, and particularly the great tragedies caused by the two world conflagrations which shook the first half of our century -- all that brought about a decisive change on the plane of law. It is that change which, while banning war as a legal institution, has established the primacy of the principles and rules of law as the foundation of world peace.

15. The synthesis of a long process of historical development, condemnation of war and force as a means of solving differences between States is one of the pillars of the edifice of international legality. It is that imperative that is enshrined by the United Nations Charter, which proclaims the determination of the peoples to:

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

"save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind", and for that end to: "ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used".

16. The natural corollary of that state of law must be the accomplishment of another change, the destruction of the very means of warfare. And this change should be made by means of extensive measures of disarmament. Disarmament -- demanded by the stringent realities of life and stemming from the fundamental standards of the Charter -- is a primary objective of the international community. The General Assembly a decade ago declared the question of disarmament to be "the most important one facing the world today", and expressed the hope that:

"measures leading towards the goal of general and complete disarmament, under effective international control will be worked out in detail and agreed upon in the shortest possible time" (resolution 1378 (XIV)).

17. Disarmament is at the same time the essential task which has been assigned to our Committee. As we have already had the opportunity of stating, it seems to us quite natural, ten years after the adoption of that important decision of the United Nations, to examine the ground covered, to see what has been done and more particularly what remains to be done in order to accomplish the task entrusted to us. If we cast a glance at the post-war period, in the light of the activities peculiar to this Committee, we observe that spanning this period in a striking way have been two parallel but incompatible processes: on the one hand, the constant concern and the firm demands of the peoples to see specific measures of disarmament carried out -- which spring from the serious threat represented by the increase in stocks of the means of destruction; on the other hand, the frightening arms race, and first of all in the nuclear field. A simple comparison of those two processes highlights a paradoxical situation. While the armaments spiral soars at a vertiginous rate, the disarmament negotiations have yielded only modest results.

18. A permanent cause of frustration and anxiety, the arms race devours a considerable part of the wealth of humanity without increasing its security in the slightest. According to estimates, from 1900 to the present time -- that is, in almost seventy years -- humanity has wasted on military purposes more than \$4 million million. These funds, had they been used for peaceful purposes, would have sufficed during the same period to feed the entire population of the globe and to solve the housing problem everywhere in the world. If the level of the expenditure reached so far -- which

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

considerably exceeds the figure of \$180,000 million every year -- is maintained, the arms race will cost the peoples of the world during the next twenty years another \$4 million million. And if the rate of increase which has occurred in this field during recent years continues, this amount will be spent in only ten years.

19. To the gigantic material sacrifices must be added an immense human potential which is withdrawn from the sphere of constructive activities. Today -- and, consequently, in conditions of peace -- 50 million men are in the armed forces or are involved in the machinery of military preparations. One out of twenty-five inhabitants of the earth able to work, that is to say, 4 per cent of the active world population, devotes his energy and talents to non-productive ends.

20. The modern arms race is qualitative par excellence. It is based essentially on research and on advanced techniques. It is notorious that armament activities and preparations for war involve tens of thousands of scientists and specialists in the endeavour to create and to perfect the means of destruction, which prevents them from placing their intelligence and knowledge at the service of the material and spiritual well-being of society. Philip Noel-Baker very aptly wrote:

"Military research has helped to bring the arms race to the point of frenzy; indeed, it is the arms race in its most dangerous form"

(The Arms Race, A Programme for World Disarmament, Stevens, London, 1958, p.496).

That is a factor which, in our view, has not been properly reflected in disarmament negotiations.

21. The scientific and technical explosion of today strikingly reveals its dual nature: on the one hand it is a practically inexhaustible source of the accelerated progress of nations and of their multilateral development; on the other hand, it is the mainspring of innovations and improvements which are constantly increasing the power of weapons of mass destruction.

22. Thanks to the truly revolutionary conquests of science and technology and their application to the production of weapons, the arms race has attained fantastic proportions. Stocks of nuclear weapons long ago reached more than a million megatons. At the same time, and at the same rate, the delivery vehicles of weapons of mass destruction -- various kinds of rockets, nuclear submarines, supersonic aircraft, and so on -- have been developed.

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

23. What are the prospects for the development of armaments in future decades?

That is a question which is undoubtedly relevant to our negotiations. The impressive rate of scientific and technological development provides enlightening replies.

24. Ninety per cent of all the scientists and inventors who have belonged to mankind throughout its history are alive today. The use of ultra-modern installations, gigantic laboratories, complex technical instruments, computers and computing techniques has resulted in the fact that the material production of humanity, including the production of armaments, is at present being moved forward by the most effective stimulants which give it in an extremely accelerated pace.

25. The reduction of the time between the inventive thought and its industrial application -- in other words, the shortening of the distance between the idea and its implementation -- is one of the most striking aspects of the dynamism of technological progress. The rate of realization of scientific and technical thought is constantly fed by what has been called "the explosion of knowledge" which has happened in our era.

26. The "tide" of knowledge and of discoveries of contemporary man has led in the post-war period to enormous qualitative changes, so frequent and important in the field of armaments that it has been noted that every five years there has been a real revolution in military technique. If that continues we shall probably live through six or more similar revolutions in the technology of armaments between now and the end of the century.

27. At the same time the arms race is powerfully supported by the revolution in materials, a revolution which, in its turn, is in direct relation to the needs of the development of modern production. Two evaluations made by specialists particularly merit attention. The first is that in about fifteen years the material needs of humanity could become equal to the entire quantity of materials ever used. The second concerns the prospect of discovering and manufacturing on an industrial scale a wide range of materials with high qualitative properties and with a resistance that will probably be a hundred times greater than that of materials produced today. All of that will have notable effects on armaments as well.

28. The experts on the subject forwarn us that nuclear weapons will continue to be perfected, which will lead to a considerable increase in their destructive capacity -- which will increase a thousandfold -- and that that capacity will be

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

condensed in ever smaller weapons. The production of chemical and bacteriological weapons will make a leap forward from the point of view of both quality and quantity. Nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles will become increasingly efficient through the increase in their range of action, their speed and their precision. Lasers, electronic equipment and other ultra-modern techniques will be used on an ever-increasing scale for military purposes, and so on. Will those be possibilities or realities of tomorrow? Whatever the answer, it must be of concern to us -- the more so because the extraordinary mobility and speed with which the newest conquests of science and technology are being achieved is greatly reducing the distance between the forecast and its practical realization.

29. From that point of view the following example seems to us relevant. In 1931 an interesting work was published in London under the title Scientific Disarmament. The author admitted the possibility of using "sub-atomic energy" -- that is what he called it -- with a view to producing new weapons, but he arrived at a most reassuring conclusion, which is the following:

"Of course, this is the vaguest form of speculation, and we do not rely on it in any way whatsoever to support the importance of the simpler new agencies of war. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the relationship and the time interval between modern physics and the realization of these possibilities may be no more than those which we have seen between the primitive beginnings of chemistry in the Middle Ages and the use of complex organic chemicals in the Great War.

"In any case, it seems that new physical agencies for the production of casualties are likely to be related to such new phenomena, and are therefore possibilities of a very distant future. It is unlikely that time will prove us wrong if we ignore these matters in our practical consideration of disarmament". (Victor Lefebure, Scientific Disarmament, Mundanus Ltd., London, 1931, p.204).

In August 1945, that is, only fourteen years after publication of that book, the first atomic bomb revealed to mankind the appearance of the nuclear scourge.

30. When we tackle the problems raised by the arms race not only at the present time but also in the foreseeable future, such errors of evaluation as those I have just mentioned must be avoided. That was all we wished to say about the first process, that of armaments.

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

31. I shall now turn to the second process, that of disarmament. The first observation that must be made is that our negotiations have not led to the adoption of effective disarmament measures. Thanks to the negotiations that have taken place in recent years it has proved possible to achieve some agreements bearing on certain collateral measures. Those agreements are without doubt significant. However, there is one essential factor which should not be overlooked: those agreements do not affect in the slightest the arms race nor the ever-increasing accumulation of weapons in military arsenals, nor the danger they represent for the peace of the world.

32. Whatever the divergence of views on certain aspects, it seems to me that there cannot exist -- at any rate, there should not exist -- contradictory views on the urgency of the disarmament problem and its central position in the framework of efforts to preserve international peace and security. That being so, it seems to us completely abnormal that for four or five years we have dealt almost exclusively with certain partial or preventive measures, as they have often been called here. We do not minimize the usefulness and importance of such measures, nor do we want them to be ignored in the future; but they should not be substituted for our primary task, which is general disarmament. For the prophylactic actions to which we have referred, by leaving existing stocks intact -- and particularly those of nuclear weapons -- do not strike at the root of the evil and consequently do not produce the results expected from our negotiations. Those are the reasons on which we base our conviction that it is necessary to concentrate our efforts on general disarmament while giving absolute priority, of course, to measures in the nuclear field. Concurrently with that, we would naturally pursue consideration of the collateral measures already before our Committee.

33. As we all know, at the first session of the Eighteen-Nation Committee in 1962, two drafts concerning general disarmament were submitted, one by the Soviet Union (ENDC/2/Rev.1 and Corr.1) and the other by the United States (ENDC/30 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2). Those proposals served as a basis for the negotiations held between 1962 and 1964 and led to the preliminary outline of the preamble (ENDC/L.11/Rev.1) and the first four articles (ENDC/40/Rev.1 and ENDC/55) of a draft treaty on general and complete disarmament. But since 1965 that question has hardly been considered. As the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Mr. Mario Zagari, said:

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

"In our opinion, the central problem of the negotiations entrusted to our Conference, namely general and complete disarmament, has remained for too long in the background." (ENDC/PV.397, para. 62)

34. Such a state of affairs does not correspond, in our view, either to the urgency of achieving disarmament or to our terms of reference. This should be remedied as quickly as possible, all the more because, now that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (ENDC/226*) has been concluded, the imperative requirement of general disarmament is enshrined in provisions under which the parties are committed to taking specific actions. We should also like to recall that in its resolution 2454B (XXIII) the United Nations General Assembly expressly requested our Conference:

"... to make renewed efforts towards achieving substantial progress in reaching agreement on the question of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and urgently to analyse the plans already under consideration and others that might be put forward to see how in particular rapid progress could be made in the field of nuclear disarmament" (ENDC/237).

In order to implement the provisions of that resolution it is necessary to know, first of all, the attitude of the nuclear Powers towards the plans submitted by them in 1962.

35. As regards the Soviet Union, we were gratified to note the precise statement made on 22 April last by the leader of the Soviet delegation, Ambassador Roshchin, who said:

"In proposing that a new impetus be given to the negotiations on general and complete disarmament we are not faced with the need to start all over again, metaphorically speaking, from zero. We have a point of departure for such negotiations -- the aforementioned Soviet draft treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict international control. This draft treaty, worked out in full detail, is a good basis for fruitful discussions." (ENDC/PV.405, para. 49)

36. In order that the Committee may be informed of the specific situation existing today it would be useful to know the views of the authors of the second draft treaty on general and complete disarmament. To begin full and constructive discussions, motivated by the desire and political will to achieve effective agreements, is an imperative requirement at the present stage of our work.

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

37. The Socialist Republic of Romania has declared itself and still declares itself firmly in favour of general disarmament as a sure means of eliminating the threat of war and of ensuring lasting peace in the world. In the view of the Romanian delegation efforts aimed at achieving disarmament should be pursued with conviction and tenacity because only disarmament can provide the most adequate answer to the danger represented by the armaments race, and to the problem raised by the existence of nuclear weapons and the modern technology of armaments. General disarmament, and especially its main component, nuclear disarmament, best meets the need to ensure equal conditions of peace and security for all countries. It can be asserted that it is precisely through the achievement of general disarmament that the conditions will be created for the complete elimination of force from the sphere of international relations and for the complete victory of the rules of law, justice and equity.

38. A gradual advance towards the realization of humanity's aspirations for general disarmament would result in the freeing of huge material resources so necessary for speeding up the development process in which so many countries and nations are today engaged. Through a decrease in military expenditure the possibility would be created to allocate some of the funds thus freed to supporting the less developed countries in their efforts to achieve economic and social progress. Moreover, the accomplishment of disarmament would enable thousands and thousands of scientists, research workers and experts, whose activities are now dedicated to the creation of destructive means, to devote their forces to peaceful and constructive activities.

39. It is undeniably important for the success of our negotiations to recognize the essential fact that an atmosphere of mutual confidence must be created. That presupposes the permanent contribution of all countries through actions calculated to promote a constant lessening of tension, as well as understanding and co-operation among nations. With a view to creating an atmosphere free from concern and suspicion, the international behaviour of States must be improved and perfected and the principles and fundamental norms of the United Nations Charter must be strictly respected. Because,

"Within an international environment in which the law habit has come to prevail it is much easier to envisage a commitment by States to comprehensive disarmament" (Security in Disarmament, edited by Richard J. Barnet and Richard A. Falk, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1965 p.204).

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

40. Disarmament must be integrated into a global strategy for peace which, while designed to tackle the most acute problems of universal scope, would be the basis for immediate and long-term energetic actions by the whole of the international community. Now, on the eve of a new decade, we should -- on the basis of a clear view of the realities -- devise a coherent programme of work capable of giving perspective, continuity and consistency to the efforts of all devoted to the strengthening of peace and the multilateral development of all nations. May I recall in this context the perspicacious words of the Secretary-General, U Thant, who stated on 9 May:

"I do not wish to seem overdramatic, but I can only conclude from the information that is available to me as Secretary-General that the Members of the United Nations have perhaps ten years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve the human environment, to defuse the population explosion, and to supply the required momentum to world development efforts.

"If such a global partnership is not forged within the next decade, then I very much fear that the problems I have mentioned will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control".

41. Thanks to his genius and to his efforts over thousands of years, man has succeeded in building the present high civilization, which offers him unlimited possibilities for progress. At the same time, he has created such means of destruction that his very existence is threatened. The highest duty and the most important task which man must set himself at this stage of history consist in being the guarantor of his own destiny and of his mighty achievements. The best way to attain that noble aim is to achieve general disarmament.

42. In spite of the difficulties inherent in such a vast enterprise and the disappointments which we have experienced so far, our efforts in the field of disarmament negotiations should be exerted with ever-increasing enthusiasm and energy, with conviction, with continuity and resolution. We must be guided by the hope that all States, and more particularly those which have a gigantic military potential, will finally understand that their own interests, as well as the future

(Mr. Ecobesco, Romania)

of humanity, will be best served in a world which, once freed of the heavy burden of armaments, will be able to devote itself exclusively to peaceful activities. The accomplishment of that great task will be of benefit to every people, large or small, and to the whole of humanity.

43. Mr. FISHER (United States of America): At our meeting on 15 May the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Sule Kolo, raised a question (ENDCPV.411, para.6) about information on the Soviet-United States technical discussions on the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions -- discussions which took place in Vienna in the middle of last month. I think that the best way of answering that question will be to read, on my behalf and on behalf also of my co-Chairman, Ambassador Roshchin, the joint United States-USSR communiqué which was issued to the Press in Vienna upon the conclusion of the talks:

"The Soviet-United States technical discussions on peaceful uses of nuclear explosions took place in Vienna from 14 to 16 April 1969.

"Soviet participants included Academician Fedorov, First Deputy Chairman of the State Committee on Atomic Energy Morokhov, and Messrs. Kedrovsky, Israel, Rodionov, Grinevsky, and Gudkov.

"United States participants included United States Atomic Energy Commissioner G.F. Tape and Messrs. R.E. Batzel, A. Holzer, J.S. Kelly, J. Rosen, H. Scoville, N. Sievering and G.C. Worth.

"The parties were of the view that underground nuclear explosions may be successfully used in the not so far off future to stimulate oil and gas production and to create underground cavities. It may also be technically feasible to use them in earth-moving work for the construction of water reservoirs in arid areas, to dig canals and in removing the upper earth layer in surface mining, etc.

"Although the economics will vary from project to project the use of nuclear explosions for these purposes is promising and would permit operations under conditions where conventional methods are either impossible or impracticable. Provided that certain requirements are met, the present state of technology will make it possible to carry out underground explosions fully meeting national or generally accepted international safety standards for the protection of the public from radiation.

(Mr. Fisher, United States of America)

"Both delegations concluded that the exchange of views on the status of this technology was very useful and the experts deem it desirable to have additional technical exchanges. Although these talks were not concerned with how peaceful nuclear explosion benefits are to be provided pursuant to article V of the non-proliferation Treaty, the parties considered these talks very timely in light of this provision of the non-proliferation Treaty, which ensures that potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to the non-nuclear-weapon States adhering to the Treaty."

44. Mr. KHALLAF (United Arab Republic): We are indebted to our co-Chairman for the statement which has just been read, and shall be very grateful if they will in due time explain to us what would be the most appropriate steps to be taken in order to implement article V of the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*).

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 412th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of U Kyaw Min, representative of Burma.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Czechoslovakia, Romania, the United States and the United Arab Republic.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 22 May 1969, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.