

CD/PV.109
24 February 1981
ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 24 February 1981, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. F. de la Gorce (France)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. M. MATI
Mr. M. DJABALLAH

Argentina: Mr. F. JIMENEZ DAVILA
Miss N. FREYRE PENABAD

Australia: Mr. R.A. WALKER
Mr. R. STEELE
Mr. T. FINDLAY

Belgium: Mr. A. ONKELINX
Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

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

Bulgaria: Mr. I. SOTIROV

Burma: U SAW HLAING
U NGWE WIN
U THAN HTUN

Canada: Mr. G. SKINNER

China: Mr. YU Peiwen
Mr. LIANG Yufan
Mr. PAN Jusheng
Mr. SA Benwang

Cuba: Mrs. V. BOROWDOSKY JACKIEWICH

Czechoslovakia: Mr. M. RUZEK
Mr. P. LUKES
Mr. A. CIMA
Mr. L. STAVINOHA

Egypt:

Mr. E.A. EL RADDY
Mr. I.A. HASSAN
Mr. M.N. FAHMY
Miss W. BASSIM

Ethiopia:

Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. J. DE BLAUSSE
Mr. H. COUTHURLS

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. H. THIELICKE
Mr. M. KAULFUSS
Mr. P. BUNTIG

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. G. PFEIFFER
Mr. N. KLINGLER
Mr. W. ROHR

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES
Mr. C. GYORFFY

India:

Mr. A.P. VENKATESWARAN
Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia:

Mr. E. SOEPRAPTO
Mr. HARYOMATARAM
Mr. F. CASIMIR
Mr. KARYONO

Iran:

Mr. D. AMERI

Italy:

Mr. V. CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO
Mr. B. CABRAS
Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan: Mr. Y. OKAWA
Mr. M. TAKAHASHI
Mr. R. ISHII
Mr. K. SHIMADA

Kenya: Mr. S. SHITANI
Mr. G. MUNIU

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Mr. M.A. CACERES

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG

Morocco: Mr. H. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. R.H. FEIN
Mr. H. WAGINMAKERS

Nigeria: Mr. O. ADENIJI
Mr. W.O. AKINSANYA
Mr. T. AGUIYI-IRONSI

Pakistan: Mr. T. ALTAF

Peru:

Poland: Mr. B. SUJKA
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. T. STROJVAS

Romania: Mr. M. MALITA
Mr. T. MELESCANU

Sri Lanka: Mr. H.H.G.S. PALIHAKKARA

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. S. STROMBACH
Mr. J. LINDIN
Mr. G. EKHOLI

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. B.P. PROKOFIEV
Mr. V.A. PERFILLEV
Mr. L.S. MOSHKOV
Mr. V.H. GANJA
Mr. A.G. DOULYAN
Mr. S.N. RIUKHINE

United Kingdom:

Mr. D.M. SUMMERHAYES
Mrs. J.I. LINK

United States of America:

Mr. C.C. FLOWERRIE
Mr. L.R. FLEISCHER
Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER
Mr. J.A. HUSKEL
Mr. H. WILSON
Mr. F.P. DeSILVERE

Venezuela:

Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT
Mr. O.A. AGUILAR

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. VERIUNEC
Mr. B. BRANKOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. LONGO B. NDAGA

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

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the Committee:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I declare open the 109th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament. According to our programme of work, as contained in document CD/144, the Committee should today begin considering item 2 of its agenda, Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

Mr. OKAWA (Japan): Mr. Chairman, so much has been said, in this room and elsewhere, about the urgency of achieving a comprehensive test ban that there is really little more to say. Nevertheless, my delegation does not feel it should remain silent on this particular subject. I know that under our programme of work I should have taken the floor last week, but I ask your indulgence for my addressing it today.

In the first place, my delegation wishes to express the hope of the Japanese Government that the trilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test ban will be resumed in the very near future. We very much appreciated the presentation last summer of the fairly detailed progress report on those negotiations, and we think we can understand the difficult and delicate nature of the problems that remain to be solved. We are also fully aware that one of the trilateral negotiators is yet in the process of reviewing its policy in the whole field of arms control and disarmament. As an outsider to these trilateral negotiations, we may not be in a position to set the pace or to propose dates for the negotiators, but as the representative of one non-nuclear-weapon State which places the highest priority on the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban, I sincerely hope -- and I am sure I am entitled to hope -- that the three Governments concerned will be able to agree on the early resumption of their negotiations.

In the statement I made to the Committee on 10 February, I urged that the Committee on Disarmament take up the question of a comprehensive test ban at its present session as the agenda item of the highest priority. And I suggested that we might study the possibility of establishing a working group to deal with the matter, if a consensus could be reached on this point. Suggestions have been put forward as to what kind of work the working group could usefully undertake. May I repeat a sentence that was contained in my statement of the other day: "It goes without saying that the work on the CTF to be undertaken in this Committee should be conducted in a manner and to the extent that would be complementary to and not prejudicial to the ongoing trilateral negotiations". My delegation would be very much interested in listening to the views of the tripartite negotiators themselves regarding the issues which they would think could be usefully taken up in the Committee or a subsidiary organ such as a working group. In particular, we would be pleased to hear the views of the party which has expressed explicit support for the creation of the working group. In any case the mandate would be of crucial importance and we should take into account the views of the tripartite negotiators. My delegation would be willing to put forward its own ideas regarding the language. We already have four precedents, the mandates of the four existing working groups, and perhaps the language of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons may be of some use to us when we try to elaborate a text that could be acceptable to the Committee as a whole. My delegation hopes that, if and when a consensus could be reached on the establishment of a working group, the two other nuclear-weapon States, China and France, which are not participating in the tripartite negotiations, would not only join in such a consensus but would also take part in and contribute to the work of the working group.

One of the beneficial effects of discussions on a comprehensive test ban taking place in a working group would be to give the 37 other members of this Committee who do not sit in on the tripartite talks a certain sense of participation, however limited it might be, in the efforts to produce something that is after all of vital interest to all of us.

The final product of the negotiations must be a multilaterally negotiated treaty, a multilateral treaty in the true sense of the word.

(Mr. Okawa, Japan)

The distinguished Ambassadors of Nigeria and India, among others, have urged the delegations of the three countries participating in the tripartite negotiations to respond to the questions which were put to them by many delegations towards the end of the session last year in connection with the tripartite report contained in document CD/130. I associate myself with that request and hope that the early resumption of the tripartite talks will facilitate their responding to that request. My own delegation raised a number of points in the statement I made in the Committee on 7 August last, among which was my delegation's concern that the international exchange of seismic data will not be put into operation for quite some time even after the entry into force of the treaty. This concern was revived the other day when I heard the distinguished Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic say that "It goes without saying that a global system for international co-operative measures to detect and identify seismic events could be established only after the conclusion of a CTBT". My delegation continues to feel that the detailed arrangements for the international exchange should be elaborated before the entry into force of the treaty. We also maintain that a global experimental exercise of the exchange system should be implemented in advance of the entry into force of the treaty so that we can be certain that it will work effectively and that it can be put into operation immediately after the treaty enters into force. We find it difficult to understand why one of the tripartite negotiators which has expressed its support for the establishment of the CTB working group is reluctant to take part in such a global experimental exercise, and did not find it possible to participate even in the recent trial exchange that was conducted on a regional basis in October and November 1980. I reiterate my delegation's hope that all countries represented in the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts will be able to participate in future trial exchanges and also in an experimental exercise on a global scale that would greatly contribute to the smooth and immediate implementation of the exchange system upon the entry into force of the treaty.

Finally, I am instructed to reiterate my Government's interest in seeing all States voluntarily refraining from all nuclear-test explosions, including all nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, during the period prior to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Let me conclude these brief remarks by saying that a comprehensive nuclear test ban is not an end in itself. It has been so long delayed that its achievement has indeed come to be of special importance and significance. But it should be seen in the wider and longer perspective: it is an essential ingredient in the NPT framework, and if we wish to preserve and strengthen the non-proliferation régime we must have a comprehensive test-ban treaty, and it would constitute the first specific, concrete step on the long road leading us to the ultimate goal -- nuclear disarmament.

Mr. SHITEMI (Kenya): Mr. Chairman, it is a matter of deep satisfaction to my delegation to see you in the Chair of this Committee. You bring to your assignment very wide and relevant experience which you have applied competently in the course of your chairmanship. I also wish to express our gratitude to His Excellency Ambassador Tadesse Terfe of Ethiopia, a neighbour and a close friend of Kenya, for a job well done during his tenure of office as Chairman of this Committee.

On behalf of the Kenyan delegation, I welcome in our midst the four Ambassadors of Egypt, Pakistan, Romania and Zaire. We are confident that their presence in this Committee will add to the voice of reason and understanding without which the work of the Committee would falter.

All that needs to be said about starting negotiations in this Committee towards a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty and the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament has been said. Ambassador Okawa of Japan put it appropriately

(Mr. Shitemi, Kenya)

for us when he said: "Japan has pleaded time and again that the task of the greatest urgency in the field of disarmament is the achievement of nuclear disarmament" (his speech at the plenary meeting of 10 February 1981).

This point was brought up at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly which, in resolution 35/152 B, called upon the Committee on Disarmament, "as a matter of priority and for the purpose of an early commencement of the negotiations on the substance of the problem, to undertake consultations in which to consider, inter alia, the establishment of an ad hoc working group on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and of nuclear disarmament, with a clearly defined mandate". The mandate to establish an ad hoc working group within the Committee on Disarmament on CTBT has already been given by the General Assembly in its resolution 35/145 A in which it reaffirmed its "conviction that a treaty to achieve the prohibition of all nuclear-test explosions by all States for all time is a matter of the highest priority".

This Committee has not acted on these urgent requests from the United Nations General Assembly. The reasons for the delay are becoming a little clearer now; these are due to mounting fears and suspicions among the nations of the two military alliances -- the NATO and Warsaw alliances. A distinguished Ambassador from one of the alliances, quoting his own Minister for Foreign Affairs, put his finger on the problem when he said: "Nor do we favour the negotiation of agreements which would leave one side with an advantage over the other or, through the absence of verification, would lead to suspicion and uncertainty". And so, out of ignorance of what the other party is up to, the best policy would seem to be, at least from the viewpoint of one of the parties, to increase your weaponry of all types until the other side is outpaced (this is of course not possible, neither is a position of parity or balance possible). The position of overkill reached a thousand times over by both sides makes the two positions illogical and indefensible. It is for this very reason that we should get started and discuss how to end the testing and manufacture of nuclear weapons, even if it takes ten years. Such discussions, involving all of us in this Committee, will help to focus the attention of the whole world on the plight of humanity trapped by its own fears and suspicions of its neighbours, trapped by the erroneous belief that arms offer the only realistic deterrent to would-be enemies. In 1975, an arms salesman, Sir Raymond Smith, confirmed this erroneous position in a BBC interview in Venezuela, when he said: "We recognize arms not as a means to starting a war, but as a means to stopping a war." The question raised by His Excellency Ambassador Adeniji of Nigeria cannot be avoided. He asked: "How much further destructive capacity is required on either side of the nuclear divide before it is considered sufficient to deter?" This question was answered by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth: "Yet the truth is that even more sophisticated terror weapons, once explained away as intended to deter, are becoming, through their cycles of development, destabilizing elements that make nuclear holocaust more, rather than less likely. The truth is that the nuclear arms race has lost its rationality and become a monstrous menace." The Minister of State of Sweden, Mrs. Inga Thorsson, articulate and clear as usual, provided an answer to this question also: "It must be demonstrated that the nuclear-weapons mystique, the notion that a nuclear weapon in any way can increase the national security of any State is a fraud, what I have earlier called the greatest fallacy of our time, which, far from increasing anybody's security, is certain to reduce it for all." Mrs. Thorsson is right and we should support that position; she has already become the conscience of this Committee and we want her to know she is not alone in her campaign to see a more secure and safer world realized.

(Mr. Shitemi, Kenya)

We are not oblivious of the fact that there is injustice in the world. We ask for a sober assessment and not panic in the face of the arms race. The present international economic system is not working for the benefit of all nations. Repeated calls for a new international economic order have fallen on deaf ears. Those who have economic advantages derived from the past want to retain these at all costs. We are not oblivious of the situation brought out in a statement by His Excellency Ambassador Summerhayes when he said: "None of us can ignore the effects on international confidence of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the implications for the arms control process. Its shadow continues to fall on the work of this Committee." Ambassador Summerhayes acknowledged the fact that it is not the only such shadow; he did indirectly imply too that that shadow continues to fall on bilateral and SALT negotiations. There is therefore very little to be expected out of trilateral negotiations. All the more reason for the world community to continue to press for negotiations to begin in this Committee.

The other shadow that threatens world peace and stability is that cast by the racist régime of South Africa. We will not let anybody forget the fact that South Africa is the military and economic power she is because of the support she continues to receive from certain western States. She now sends troops to Angola, Mozambique and Zambia to kill and destroy at will while within her own borders one of the most violent racist police States has made the lives of the majority of blacks miserable and short-lived. The idea that the Cape sea route is of strategic value to western defence systems and must be protected is a myth: there is no such thing as the Cape sea route; there is only a vast sea between South Africa and the Antarctic, and to call that a sea route is like calling the Atlantic a sea route. We ask the friends of South Africa to know that the time for hypocrisy is running out. South Africa is the main cause of the rivalry between the Superpowers in Africa; it is likely to become the reason for nuclear proliferation in that continent, if it is confirmed that South Africa has nuclear weapons. The recent report of the Secretary-General on this subject makes very disturbing reading.

One of the most worrying problems of a runaway arms race is, of course, its economic and social consequences. A United Nations study of 1978 which examined the relationship between military expenditure and current economic problems of inflation, recession and low growth, regards high military expenditure as a contributory factor to the depletion of natural resources. Inflation is a by-product of militarization, which overheats the economy. In a statement to the non-governmental organizations gathering at the United Nations in New York on 23 October 1980, Mr. S.S. Ramphal, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, said: "Unemployment in the industrialized countries in 1980 is twice what it was at the end of the 1960s with 20 million jobless according to OECD figures. Four hundred and fifty million unemployed is the ILO figure for developing countries excluding China ... The arms race does not provide more jobs, it prevents more jobs being provided." A prominent former President of the United States of America, Dwight D. Eisenhower, a military man, put it well: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in a final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold and are not clothed."

We ask for one thing: that we should start meaningful negotiations in whatever groups we form in this Committee to seek ways and means of ending the mad rush to the abyss of destruction which is quite apparent in the runaway nuclear arms race; the accumulation of huge stockpiles of various types of weapons heightens, not minimizes, our insecurity, and will never be a permanent and reliable deterrent.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Kenya for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Mr. FEIN (Netherlands): I shall not hide from you the fact that my speaking today, before the month runs out, is not divorced from my wish to address some words to you, while you are still holding the high office of the chairmanship of this Committee.

The other day one of our colleagues very aptly mentioned that your chairmanship sets the seal on the most welcome participation of France in the work of this Committee following the decision taken at the time of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Speaking in that same spirit and relating your chairmanship to the participation of your country, France, in this negotiating body, I am very much aware that I must choose my words with care. For France holds its own, rather puritanical views of the origins of this body: how did it come into existence; is it or is it not the result of what went before? This question, as you know, is sometimes referred to as "the theological question".

I personally, when contemplating the French views on the origins of this Committee, am reminded of the more orthodox theories of the immaculate conception. In that spirit, your ascent to the chairmanship does indeed acquire a special significance. And it is in that same spirit that I salute you as a wise leader; your chairmanship in this month of February, which regrettably has only 28 days, augurs well for this year's work of the CD.

Allow me now to descend to the more mundane business of the order of the day and say a word or two on behalf of my Government about CTB and CW.

But first I wish to welcome in our midst our new colleagues in the quest for disarmament, the distinguished Ambassadors of Egypt, Pakistan, Romania and Zaire.

Today I wish to place on record, once again, the urgent desire of my Government that a CTBT be concluded as soon as possible — in the near future. On more than one occasion, here in Geneva and elsewhere, Netherlands representatives have expressed the disappointment of the Netherlands Government that such a treaty has not yet been concluded. Today the conclusion of a CTBT seems as remote as ever, notwithstanding the fact that the main technical problems are apparently ripe for solution. We regret this as much as we regret that the CD has remained virtually passive with regard to such an important issue.

While stressing the importance of the trilateral negotiations, we believe at the same time that it is equally necessary for the CD to translate that trilateral agreement into a multilateral CTB treaty. Only genuine multilateral parameters can make a CTBT sufficiently significant to other States for them to adhere to the treaty. If not, the CTB might lose part of its value as an arms control measure.

(Mr. Fein, Netherlands)

As we hold that the CD should build upon the results of the trilateral talks, we call upon the three negotiating Powers to bring their negotiations to a speedy and positive conclusion. When I mention three negotiating Powers, I should add that we would expect the two other nuclear-weapon Powers to follow suit, soon after the CTBT has been submitted to the CD.

Already too much time has been wasted in aimless discussions. We would want this Committee to start taking positive action this year. That the Committee need not remain completely passive has been proven by the successful discussions and preparatory work undertaken by the seismic experts group, in which also my country participates.

We believe that the best method of undertaking positive action would be by establishing a working group on the CTB as asked for by many other members of the negotiating body. At the thirty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Netherlands delegation already indicated that we are in favour of such a step.

I should like to point out, as did the distinguished Ambassador from Nigeria the other day, that the participation of members of this Committee in the discussions on a CTBT could be helpful. I believe this has already been proven to be the case, for example in the negotiations on chemical weapons. We believe, therefore, that any fears of undue interference are unfounded.

Perhaps the hesitation to accept a working group is also based on uncertainty with regard to the mandate of a CTB working group. If such were the case then this difficulty could best be solved by informal discussions of the terms of such a mandate.

I would therefore suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of this Committee, that we set up some kind of informal consultation machinery to explore the possible terms of a mandate acceptable to the nuclear-weapon Powers.

Such an informal contact group, possibly consisting of a few interested representatives from each of the three groups and of course the representatives of the nuclear-weapon Powers, could discuss the proposals already made so far concerning working groups to deal with (certain aspects of) a CTB and could possibly also draw upon the experience of the existing working groups, such as the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons.

We are confident, or at least hopeful, that such informal discussions could lead to agreement on the terms of reference of a CTB working group. The Netherlands would be willing to participate in and contribute its best efforts in such informal discussions.

I now also wish to say a few words on CW. I do not at this stage intend to enter into the substance, but rather to make a suggestion of an organizational character.

(Mr. Fein, Netherlands)

This Committee has already decided to reserve the period of 23 March - 3 April for debate on CW. We have chosen that period in order to make it possible for us to profit from the presence in Geneva of a significant number of CW experts, who will attend a meeting of the Pugwash movement during the week following that period.

I would like to make sure, however, that all the CW experts from States members of the CD who are interested, as well as those of non-member States interested in CW, are actually informed as soon as possible of our wish to see them participate in our work during this period. It is my hope that the Secretariat, possibly in consultation with the Chairman of the CW Working Group, will take the necessary steps to ensure that all parties concerned are informed through the proper channels of the correct dates and of our intentions.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands for his statement and I thank him also for his friendly remarks about myself and my country.

U SAW HLAING (Burma): Mr. Chairman, allow me first to join those speakers before me, who have welcomed you to the Chair of the Committee on Disarmament. Having had the privilege of following your discreet and effective work in this Committee over the past two years, my delegation has great satisfaction in seeing you presiding over the proceedings of the Committee at the beginning of its 1981 session. We are convinced that the qualities of tact and wisdom which you have amply demonstrated during the past weeks promise a very effective result of our start for the year.

May I take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to Ambassador Terrefe of Ethiopia who chaired the Committee since last August for his fruitful efforts during the final stages of our work last year.

May I also take this opportunity to extend our warm greetings and best wishes to the distinguished heads of the delegations of Egypt, Pakistan, Romania and Zaire who have recently joined us in this Committee.

We are at the beginning of our third year since this negotiating body was restructured in accordance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. What we have achieved so far in the work of the Committee is still far from the goal set out in the Final Document with regard to final objectives and priorities of general and complete disarmament. What we have reached -- agreements on the rules of procedure, the agenda and the programme of work -- are only the basic elements with which the Committee has to start their negotiation. No one can deny that our progress has been very slow and the results, whatever we have at present, do not meet the expectations of the world community.

(U Saw Hlaing, Burma)

However, my delegation has deep satisfaction to see that at the later part of our last session, we were able to achieve progress which previous disarmament negotiating bodies had failed to reach, especially on the establishment of four ad hoc working groups which we believe are the best possible mechanism to advance effective and substantive negotiations. As a result of substantive negotiations in the four working groups, the Committee has been able initially to identify issues, their scopes and nature, methods and forms of negotiation and various negotiating positions. These are the bases we have now for further negotiations on the four priority items without consuming much of our time on procedural matters.

These modest results were achieved last year despite all the talk of deterioration in the international climate. We have no doubt that turns of international politics and world events have a direct bearing and impact on any disarmament negotiations. The events of last year showed us how delicate and fragile are détente and the structure of peace. In spite of these, with a sense of compromise and conciliation, the Committee on Disarmament was able to achieve some measures of progress.

Again at the beginning of this year, the international climate needed to help forward speedy negotiations in the Committee is not much nearer existing than it was last year. There is no doubt that world events will influence the work of the Committee, but in no way should they be allowed to hamper the work of this Committee. On the contrary, all these events have shown us that our work is more than ever necessary and the needs for disarmament agreements are more urgent now. They once again emphasize the urgency of concluding effective disarmament measures and the necessary and indispensable role of the Committee on Disarmament. No doubt, these impacts will make our negotiations harder. We should continue our effort with perseverance to achieve our objectives under the mandate assigned to this Committee.

National security is of primary importance to all nations as much as disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, is to the world community. It is with this in mind that we have pleaded time and again to look for alternative measures in building up national security by developing co-operation and understanding between States. My delegation is convinced that genuine disarmament can only be achieved by these measures. I believe there is no short cut to disarmament, particularly to nuclear disarmament.

An examination of the disarmament proposals, reports, negotiation proceedings in the past and at present reveals that the difficulties which stand in the way of a disarmament agreement are not scientific and technical any more, but political and psychological. What we are lacking is a political climate derived from harmonious international relations free of fear and suspicions among States. It is therefore necessary for all nations strictly to refrain from actions that would aggravate international tension and undermine harmony among nations.

(U Saw Hlaing, Burma)

In the fulfilment of the goals of general and complete disarmament, my country's basic approach to disarmament remains that we should proceed through the method of seeking gradual and phased agreements and by an aggregation of limited gains reach totality of achievement. But we must also bear in mind that to keep in pace with arms race, research and the qualitative improvement of a wide range of weapons, all disarmament negotiations need to keep abreast of the new developments and they must be pursued in a realistic manner.

I congratulate you for your ability and leadership, Mr. Chairman, as a result of which the Committee has been able in a very short time to re-establish and to resume the ad hoc working groups which were in operation last year. Within this short time we were able to establish an agenda and programme of work for this year. I believe the need for urgency is felt among all of us around this table in the light of the unpredictable nature of the international climate and the approaching special session which is only a year away from us now. If we are to fulfil the tasks assigned to us and meet some of our obligations, we will have to achieve them within the next few months.

There are two items on the Committee's agenda which in our consideration have been accorded highest priority. Regrettably, we have not yet succeeded in reaching consensus on establishing subsidiary bodies for these highest priority items. I wish to express the hope of the delegation of Burma that the proposal of the Group of 21 for the establishment of ad hoc working groups on these two items will be successfully materialized this year.

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive of all weapons now in existence and a nuclear war with the existing accumulated explosive power could annihilate all forms of life on earth. In total disregard of this destructive power, nuclear-weapon States continue to commit themselves to a further and more dangerous escalation in the quantity and quality of nuclear weapons in their arsenals. It will be sheer insanity if these weapons of mass destruction are deployed either by accident or by intention. For, in the final reckoning, as the Secretary-General has said, there will be no winners, only human civilization will be wiped off this planet. It is for this reason that the further escalation of nuclear armament and further steps towards self-destruction should be stopped.

My delegation attaches importance to an early achievement of progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. This is the most dangerous area for mankind and the area where progress is most urgently needed. In our view this item deserves the urgent attention of the Committee during this session. At its thirty-fifth session the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 35/152 C,

(U Saw Hlaing, Burma)

urged the Committee on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc working group on this subject upon the initiation of its present session, and advised that it should begin its negotiations on this vital question affecting the security of all nations of the world. If this Committee is to discharge the mandate assigned to it by the international community, it is necessary for us to undertake negotiations using the best available machinery and methods within this Committee. In this regard the Group of 21 submitted in 1980 a working paper (CD/116), in which substantive issues were outlined for our negotiations. My delegation is of the view that the Committee on Disarmament should reach an early consensus on the setting up of the ad hoc working group and embark upon negotiations in accordance with paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

My delegation also attaches importance to the question of the realization of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which is an essential measure to halt the momentum of nuclear-weapons development. During the last session of the Committee on Disarmament the Group of 21 submitted several working papers, including document CD/64, in which it proposed the establishment of an ad hoc working group on this item. At its thirty-fifth session the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 35/145 B requested the Committee on Disarmament to take the necessary steps, including the establishment of a working group, to initiate substantive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty at the beginning of its 1981 session and to submit a draft treaty to the General Assembly not later than at its second special session devoted to disarmament. It is the hope of my delegation that the Committee will reach consensus without further delay on the establishment of an ad hoc working group on the subject of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Last year we were somewhat heartened by the strong political commitment of the three negotiating Powers to completion of a CTBT. We are aware of the ongoing nature of their negotiations on this subject.

In our opinion the trilateral negotiations should not stand in the way of positive developments in the work of this Committee. It is the considered view of my delegation that the negotiation processes in this multilateral forum in no way detract from the work of other disarmament negotiating bodies outside its framework. On the contrary, a complementarity of basic objectives exists, and the work of the CD could be much enhanced by positive contributions from them.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Burma for his statement and also for his kind words regarding myself. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor in this debate? It seems not.

In that case I should like to say a few words as the representative of France. I should like to give a brief explanation in reply to a statement made at our last plenary meeting by the distinguished representative of Iran. I hope that this explanation will be considered as being non-polemical. The remarks made by the distinguished representative of Iran contained accusations against the French Government which the latter, as I have said, regrets, and which it can naturally not accept. I would add that the Committee on Disarmament does not seem to us to be the place for bringing up problems of a bilateral character. I should like to say that the remarks to which I am referring, with respect to the relations between France and Iran as regards certain deliveries about which the two countries had reached an agreement, do not correspond to the facts as we know them and as the Iranian Government too, of course, knows them. The French authorities fulfil contracts they have signed, but the Iranian representative declared that they had refused, under various pretexts, to deliver a number of patrol boats to his country. I should like to state that after the lifting of the embargo consequent to certain events about which you all know, the French authorities immediately informed the Iranian authorities that they were prepared to hand over to them the three naval vessels the construction and delivery of which had formed the subject of a contract, as soon as certain financial and technical problems relating to the contract had been settled. The French authorities have no intention whatever of delaying this delivery. That is all I wanted to say.

Mr. AMERI (Iran): I would like to reserve the right of my delegation to respond to the statement of the distinguished representative of France when we have received the text of his statement, studied it and consulted our Government.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I take note of the statement of the representative of Iran. If there are no other speakers, I would suggest that we hold an informal meeting for just a very few minutes to consider questions concerning the participation of States not members of the Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): We have just considered in informal meeting the requests submitted on behalf of three States not members of the Committee regarding their participation in meetings of some of the Committee's ad hoc working groups. In accordance with our practice I propose to take up these requests one after the other in chronological order. The relevant draft decisions appear in working papers Nos. 30, 31 and 32.

(The Chairman)

The first request comes from Switzerland. The corresponding draft decision is in working paper No. 30. 1/ If there are no observations I shall consider that the draft decision is adopted. There are no observations.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): The second request is that of Finland, and the corresponding draft decision is in Working Paper No. 31. 2/ If there are no objections I shall consider that the draft decision is adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): The third request is on behalf of Denmark, and the corresponding draft decision is in Working Paper No. 32. 3/ If there are no objections I shall consider that the draft decision is adopted.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): The next plenary meeting of the Committee will be held, as planned, on Thursday, 26 February, at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. ADENIJI (Nigeria): Mr. Chairman, following the informal meeting which was held yesterday in which we took decisions which have now been confirmed, it appears to me that it would be useful to request the Secretariat to prepare a transcript of the useful discussions which we had on the question of the two additional working groups that were proposed. I would, therefore, wish to ask if you would consider the possibility of the Committee requesting the Secretariat to make the transcript for distribution, on an informal basis, of course.

1/ "In response to the request of Switzerland [CD/154] and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of its rules of procedure, the Committee decides to invite the representative of Switzerland to participate during 1981 in the meetings of the ad hoc working groups on chemical weapons and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons."

2/ "In response to the request of Finland [CD/145 and CD/156] and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of its rules of procedure, the Committee decides to invite the representative of Finland to participate during 1981 in the meetings of the ad hoc working groups on chemical weapons and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons."

3/ "In response to the request of Denmark [CD/146 and CD/157] and in accordance with rules 33 to 35 of its rules of procedure, the Committee decides to invite the representative of Denmark to participate during 1981 in the meetings of the ad hoc working group on chemical weapons."

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Nigeria. I presume that this request would not present the Secretariat with any practical or material difficulties and it is one, moreover, for which there are certain precedents with which we are all familiar in the Committee. We can therefore decide that a transcript of that meeting should be distributed informally.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): Are there any other comments or questions? It would seem not.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.