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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 15 March 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Paul Joachim von Stülpnagel (Federal Republic of Germany)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 448th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the beginning, allow me to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference, to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg, who is addressing this plenary meeting as first speaker. The Minister has held a number of important governmental positions during his career, having been State Secretary in the Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Defence, as well as Minister of Defence before his present appointment on 9 March 1987. He has also discharged other high-level responsibilities relating to international affairs, an area in which he has accumulated wide experience. There is no need for me to elaborate on the significant contributions that Norway, still a non-member, has made and continues to make to the work of the Conference. Suffice it to note the document the Minister is introducing today, which refers precisely to the active role being played by his country in the Conference.

I should also like to recall that exactly 26 years ago yesterday - 14 March 1962 - the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community held its first plenary meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers. Since then, a number of important agreements have been concluded. However, much remains to be done. I do hope that we might be able, in a year's time, to welcome the conclusion of yet another disarmament convention in this forum.

In conformity with our programme of work, the Conference begins consideration of agenda item 4 entitled "Chemical weapons". In accordance with rule 30 of its rules of procedure however, any member who wishes to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Norway and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

I now give the floor to the first speaker on my list, His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg.

Mr. STOLTENBERG (Norway): It gives me great pleasure to be the first Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs to address the Conference on Disarmament, the single negotiating forum for global disarmament questions. I am particularly pleased, Mr. President, to address the Conference under the presidency of so distinguished a representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, a country with which my country has such close and friendly co-operation in a wide range of areas.

The historic signing of the INF treaty in Washington last December represents a breakthrough for arms reduction talks in a European as well as in a global context. This Treaty is a concrete result of the active, constructive dialogue which has been pursued at high political level during the past few years. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to President Reagan and General-Secretary Gorbachev, as well as to the two Foreign Ministers and their negotiators, for having achieved the first nuclear disarmament agreement in history.

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It has long been maintained that the States that have the largest nuclear arsenals have a fundamental responsibility for taking the lead in the field of disarmament. The successful conclusion of the INF Treaty shows that the United States and the Soviet Union have been willing to take the first step in this direction.

It has been said that the INF weapons represent only 3-4% of all existing nuclear arsenals. These figures may be correct, but they may also be misleading. Such a statement does not take into consideration the important political possibilities opened up by the INF treaty. It might actually stop the vicious circle of the arms race and create conditions favourable to promoting confidence and further disarmament. In other words, a good circle.

The heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Alliance recently confirmed their readiness to make use of all possibilities for effectively verifiable arms control agreements which lead to a stable and secure balance of forces at a lower level. They also outlined elements of a comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament as follows:

A 50% reduction in the strategic offensive nuclear weapons of the United States and the Soviet Union;

The global elimination of chemical weapons;

The establishment of a stable and secure level of conventional forces in Europe;

Tangible and verifiable reductions of American and Soviet land-based nuclear missile systems of shorter range, leading to equal ceilings.

The INF Treaty is also important because it establishes the principle of asymmetric reductions in order to reach an equal level of military forces. The Agreement contains the most extensive verification provisions ever agreed upon. I would particularly like to emphasize the agreed procedures for on-site inspections. It is equally important that the agreement seems to have helped considerably to restore public confidence in arms control as a component of our security policy.

Advantage should now be taken of the momentum created by the INF Treaty to reach agreements on reductions in other categories of nuclear arms, as well as in conventional arms. In our view, no categories should be excluded a priori.

The Norwegian Government strongly supports the efforts to reach agreement on a 50% reduction in strategic arms, with appropriate sub-ceilings. The results of the summit in Washington have given reason to hope for a START agreement at the next summit. However, many details still have to be worked out. It is our hope that the negotiators will be able to overcome the remaining obstacles and reach an agreement on a sustainable régime of mutual restraint and preservation of the ABM Treaty.

The limitations agreed upon should not shift the military confrontation to new categories of weapons in areas which have so far enjoyed relatively low

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tension. From a Norwegian point of view, we are therefore particularly pleased that the negotiating parties have agreed to limit the deployment of long-range, nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles, independent of the other limits under negotiation. We hope that the parties will find effective and mutually acceptable methods of verifying such limitations.

The INF Treaty has caused increased attention to be focused on the issue of reducing nuclear weapons having a range shorter than 500 km. Norway would like to see this process in conjunction with the conventional stability talks.

In addition to the United States-Soviet efforts to reach an agreement on a 50% reduction of strategic nuclear arms, the efforts to formulate a mandate for new negotiations on conventional stability in Europe are making progress in Vienna. Substantial reductions in nuclear arsenals will emphasize the gravity of the current lack of balance in conventional arms between the two military alliances in Europe.

The objective of the new negotiations on conventional stability must be to enhance stability and security in Europe at a lower level of forces. The disparities threatening stability and security, and the capability for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action should be eliminated. The new negotiations must move away from the focus on manpower alone towards a structured approach focused on military fighting power.

The question of stability and security in Europe is not confined to military issues between the two super-Powers. The East-West tension in Europe must be reduced by establishing a constructive dialogue and new patterns of co-operation across the dividing lines. The Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe forms a framework for a broad programme of action for improving relations between Eastern and Western Europe.

The third Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe follow-up conference to be held since the signing of the Helsinki Final Act has now been in session for 16 months. Despite the favourable climate of the negotiations between the super-Powers, which resulted in the INF Treaty, the Vienna negotiations have proven difficult to conclude. The negotiations on the elaboration of further confidence- and security-building measures are progressing in a satisfactory manner. However, Eastern concessions within the human rights field are necessary. Increased efforts should now be made to achieve an early conclusion of the conference with a substantial, balanced final document.

In view of the danger of renewed use of chemical weapons and further proliferation of these weapons, a world-wide ban on chemical weapons is urgently needed. Therefore, all efforts should be concentrated on accelerating the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament with a view to concluding the Chemical Weapons Convention at the earliest possible date.

Such a convention must be global, comprehensive in scope and effectively verifiable. It should lead to the elimination of all existing stocks and production facilities within the agreed 10-year period, thus significantly enhancing international security. Accordingly, it is in the interests of all States to contribute to sustaining the momentum of the negotiations.

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Norway has no chemical weapons and has stated unequivocally that such weapons shall not be stationed on Norwegian territory. In addition, my Government is committed to doing its utmost to promote the negotiations on the Chemical Weapons Convention.

A convention banning chemical weapons should be based on the important principle of asymmetrical arms reduction embodied in the INF Treaty. These negotiations are complex, since the Chemical Weapons Convention will have to contain more comprehensive verification provisions than any existing multilateral arms control convention.

Much detailed work remains to be done in the field of verification, particularly in the areas of non-production and on-site inspection on challenge. I have studied with interest the recent proposal for ad hoc checks on the chemical industry made by my colleague Dr. Hans-Dietrich Genscher of the Federal Republic of Germany. As a safety net, the Convention must also include a system of on-site inspection on challenge within 48 hours and without the right of refusal.

I am pleased that the Canadian-Norwegian proposal of July 1987 concerning the verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons will provide a basis for negotiations on the relevant procedures.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a priority goal which should be reached at the earliest possible date. The international community expects all the negotiating parties on the Conference on Disarmament to do everything within their power to arrive at a world-wide, comprehensive and verifiable ban. I am confident that all States represented at the CD will intensify their efforts to surmount the remaining obstacles.

A comprehensive nuclear test ban is another important item on the international disarmament agenda. In my view, such a ban must comprise both nuclear weapon tests and peaceful nuclear explosions by all countries, in all environments. Such a comprehensive ban would promote non-proliferation efforts and represent a further contribution to halting the nuclear arms races.

We are encouraged by the full-scale, stage-by-stage negotiations on nuclear testing initiated by the United States and the Soviet Union. A development leading up to an early ratification of the 1974 and 1976 threshold treaties, and ultimately to a reduction and halt in such tests, would be highly welcome.

However, nuclear testing is not only the concern of the nuclear-weapon States. It is therefore regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree on a mandate for a committee on a nuclear test ban since 1983. Such a committee should commence work without delay on practical and interrelated issues which, in any case, need to be addressed in detail before a test-ban treaty can be concluded. This will demand flexibility of all parties concerned.

A global seismological network would represent the cornerstone of a verification system for a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Great importance should therefore be attached to the efforts of the Group of Scientific Experts

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to develop a global system for the international exchange of seismic data. We are pleased that there is no longer any objection to utilizing the most recent technological developments for this purpose.

In order to ensure adherence to such a future treaty, a global system will have to include high-quality seismic stations which are capable of detecting and identifying very weak seismic events. The NORESS seismic array in southern Norway represents one of the most significant recent advances in this respect.

Today, I take pleasure in informing the Conference on Disarmament that a new array of this type has been established in the county of Finnmark in northern Norway. Situated in the arctic region, this array has been named ARCESS. In combination with NORESS, it will provide excellent seismic coverage for a large part of the northern hemisphere. I can confirm that the Norwegian Government will make the three seismic installations in Norway - NORSAR, NORESS and ARCESS - available as stations in the global seismological network.

Mr. President, you should know that a country like my own pays particular importance to contributions like these, because, as all representatives of smaller countries will know, it is now and then hard to identify how we can more concretely than by speeches contribute to a development which is of imperative importance to our own countries. I feel that this is a contribution in which we concretely may do a job together with others.

Data from these three arrays will also be used in connection with the planned, large-scale global experiment in exchange and processing of seismic data. Work of this nature will create a sound basis for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The Conference on Disarmament can no longer afford to delay initiation of work on interrelated aspects of a verifiable and comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which is open to and which attracts the adherence of all States.

The improved climate in international relations also provides a positive framework for the upcoming United Nations third special session devoted to Disarmament. The two previous special sessions took place under different circumstances. The first of these adopted by consensus a Final Document which, on many issues, contains far-reaching commitments for the participating States in the field of disarmament. At the time of the second special session, the international climate had deteriorated, and it barely managed to reaffirm the validity of the Final Document.

The potential of the United Nations to contribute to the international disarmament process is to a large extent dependent on achievements made in other disarmament fora, and on East-West relations in general. At the same time, the United Nations can provide a positive stimulus to developments in disarmament bodies outside the world organization.

The promising developments in the bilateral relations between the United States and the Soviet Union now provide an important opportunity for the United Nations to play a more decisive role in the area of disarmament. The third special session is expected to help create a framework which is more

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conducive to a speedy conclusion of the current disarmament and arms control negotiations. The main task before the session should, in our opinion, be to formulate political guidelines for the continued disarmament process. To achieve this objective it is necessary to concentrate the discussion on a limited number of main topics and to pursue actively those issues that can be agreed upon. This should enable the session to formulate a political message which can promote the positive developments which are currently emerging.

The task in this Conference, here in Geneva, is an operational one, that is, to address concrete disarmament issues such as the elimination of chemical weapons, a comprehensive nuclear test ban, negative security assurances and so on. However, in conclusion I would like to remind everyone here that disarmament does not and cannot take place in a political vacuum. Disarmament is, of course, closely related to security. But security depends not only on military factors. A broader concept of security includes political, economic, social, humanitarian, human rights and ecological aspects.

This was the main message of the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development held at the United Nations Headquarters last summer. This broader concept of security has also been duly underlined by the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by my Prime Minister.

As you all know, Norway has been endorsed as the Western candidate for membership in the Conference on Disarmament. To illustrate the importance we attach to the work of this Conference, I would like to present the publication "Contributions by Norway to the Conference on Disarmament 1982-1987", which has been distributed as document CD/813 today. I am pleased to inform the Conference on Disarmament that the Norwegian research programmes on verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban and on a Chemical Weapons Convention will continue in the years ahead.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the President and to my country, which I wholeheartedly return. I now give the floor to the next speaker, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): First of all I should like to note the presence at our meeting today of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, Mr. Stoltenberg, to whose statement we listened with great attention and interest. It goes without saying that we will study most carefully all the thoughts and views he put forward.

Before I embark on my main statement, which I intend to devote to the problem of banning chemical weapons, I should like, following your example, Mr. President, to observe that today's meeting is something of a landmark in the multilateral disarmament process. Twenty-six years ago, there was held here the first meeting of the Eighteen-nation Committee on Disarmament, which marked the beginning of the joint participation in arms limitation and disarmament negotiations of socialist, neutral and non-aligned countries and Western States. The expansion of this body and its transformation into the

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Conference on Disarmament with the participation of all the nuclear Powers signified the further development of the principle of multilaterality. Looking back over these 26 years, one cannot help thinking that, in the course of such a lengthy period, far more could have been achieved, although what has been achieved is something that we must not leave out of account. With this, I will end my reference to the past and turn to the present.

In his statement on 18 February, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Vladimir Petrovsky, expressed our assessment of the state of affairs in the negotiations on banning chemical weapons and emphasized the urgent need for early completion of the elaboration of a comprehensive convention. The Soviet Union favours increasing the pace of the negotiations to the maximum and is making a considerable contribution to that in the form of practical action. The slowing of the negotiations cannot fail to worry us.

We share the assessment of this danger made by Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, on behalf of the Group of 21, on 8 March: "Procrastination and delays damage the negotiations and endanger the successful outcome, thereby compromising the overriding aim of a multilaterally negotiated total ban". We, like the Group of 21, are seriously worried by the attempts to deviate from the agreed objective of a general and complete ban on chemical weapons to substitute for the elaboration of a comprehensive convention partial measures on the regulation of chemical armaments and agreements that go only part way and permit the continued development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. Could not these signs of deviation from a total chemical weapons ban be linked to the production of binary chemical weapons which has begun? Let me emphasize that the Soviet Union's goal at the multilateral and bilateral negotiations is the early conclusion of a convention on the general and complete prohibition and destruction of all chemical weapons without any exception and of the very industrial base for their production.

We also note that many Western States support the idea of an early total ban on chemical weapons. However, in the statements by some other Western delegations, ever greater emphasis is, regrettably, being placed on the idea that there is no need to hurry, that there is still a lot more work to be done and that a "final sprint on the home stretch" is out of the question. At the same time, these delegations are totally unwilling to move from the positions which they stated at least several years ago and show no readiness for mutually acceptable compromise solutions.

Naturally, we too are - to use the words of Ambassador Solesby of the United Kingdom - in favour of drawing up "a strong convention which will remove these weapons from the entire world". We too need a convention that can be reliably verified and blocks all the loopholes for its violation. We realize the complex nature of the verification problem as well as the need to work on numerous technical details. We are, however, against using the complexity of technical issues to justify inactivity as regards the search for solutions to political issues.

In speaking at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 15 July 1986, the United Kingdom Minister of State called on us "to aim to present a complete chemical weapons convention to the United Nations General Assembly in 1987". (CD/PV.370, page 10 of the Russian text, page 9 of

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the English text). Considerable progress has since been achieved in the negotiations. The contributing factors have been in particular that we have in fact agreed to the British approach to on-site challenge inspections and have unilaterally taken substantial steps as regards openness. Why, then, is the British delegation now pessimistic in its outlook and urging us to abandon the "home stretch" and to refrain from a "final sprint"? It turns out that, when the finishing line was not in sight, it was possible to call for it to be reached in 1987, but that, now the finishing line has become a reality, the British side can no longer (I quote from the statement by Ambassador Solesby on 8 March) "understand those who suggest that all we need is a final sprint to the finishing line".

In the same statement of 15 July 1986, the United Kingdom Minister of State said regarding the preparations in the United States for the production of binary weapons, "We have no wish to see the United States resume production [of chemical weapons] if the better option - a negotiated ban - can be achieved. It would only be with much regret that we would have to envisage such a prospect" (CD/PV.370, pages 8 and 9 of the English text). Maybe the reason for the switch to pessimism is the fact that this "regrettable prospect" has become a reality?

Let me now dwell on the outstanding issues for which the prime requirement is a political decision.

I shall begin with challenge inspections. I think that the resolution of this issue as a whole is being held back by the lack of agreement on paragraph 12 of the "Chairman's paper" contained in appendix II of CD/795. The question is how the applicability of alternative arrangements will be determined - in accordance with the opinion of the requesting State, or by decision of the Executive Council. We believe that the determination should be made by the requesting State itself. Entrusting this function to the Executive Council would, in our view, be inappropriate, first of all because it would lead to delay in conducting challenge inspections.

As we understand it, those States which favour giving the Executive Council the role of a "filter" or assigning these functions to a "fact-finding group" believe that these bodies would be able to prevent the abuse of challenge inspections. I think that the possibility of such abuse worries every State. We too have expressed our apprehensions in this regard. At the same time, having carefully considered this issue, we have come to the conclusion that the danger that exists should not be overestimated.

First of all, there is a very convincing argument that was set forth by the United Kingdom in CD/715, of 15 July 1986, to the effect that "a right in the Convention to request an inspection on challenge might never have to be invoked", since "States parties would be strongly discouraged from considering acts in breach of the Convention because of the likelihood that the breach might be discovered by means of a challenge inspection" (CD/715, paragraph 4 of the explanatory part). One could add to this that the more effective the mode of inspection, the greater the deterrent role of challenge inspections. In our view, any "filter" will inevitably diminish that effectiveness.

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International inspectors will, of course, comply with certain rules during the conduct of inspections. In fact, they have already been drawn up as regards systematic inspections. I think that many of them can be applied to challenge inspections as well.

The Soviet Union calls for constructive work to reach agreement on the inclusion in the convention of provision for mandatory challenge inspections of any location or facility without the right for States to refuse them.

The question of the order of destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles remains unresolved. I shall not repeat today our assessment of the French proposal on "security stocks" - it is well known. I would just like to remark that allowing production of chemical weapons to continue after the convention enters into force would in itself be contrary to the sense of the convention. As for the references to difference in the sizes of chemical arsenals, the comparative sizes of CW arsenals will, if the convention is not concluded, be determined solely by the vicious process known as the arms race, into which ever more countries will be drawn.

We are ready to search for a mutually acceptable solution to the problem. We propose that certain categories of chemical weapons stocks should be destroyed within a shorter time-limit. Thus, unfilled chemical munitions and devices and equipment specifically designed for chemical weapons use could be destroyed by the end of the fourth year of operation of the convention. From the technical point of view, their destruction will not require so much time as the destruction of filled munitions. We are prepared to include in the agreement on the order of destruction the principle of levelling out the participants' stocks by the penultimate year of the destruction process, subject to compliance with the principle of equal security for the States parties to the convention, the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO.

We are prepared to hold with interested countries - due allowance being made for the need to preserve production secrets, and in the interests of developing co-operation in constructing and operating large-scale chemical weapons destruction facilities - consultations on the technical aspects of the destruction of chemical weapons. Such discussions could be accompanied by an appropriate practical demonstration.

To overcome the difficulties which have emerged in the course of negotiating the provision on past transfers (receipts) of chemical weapons stocks (and of control of such stocks), a compromise proposal has been put forward whereby declarations would be made only in cases where the volume of the transfers (receipts) exceeded one tonne a year and would indicate each calendar year when such a transfer (receipt) took place and the country which transferred or received the chemical weapons. We do not object to the setting of such a threshold. The declarations should cover the period from 1 January 1946 to the date of the convention's entry into force.

Mutual efforts are also needed to solve the problem of ensuring the non-production of chemical weapons in commercial industry. A difficult aspect of this problem relates to schedule [1] chemicals. I would like to remind you that the Soviet Union, in a search for a solution to this aspect of the problem, has agreed that for nitrogen mustard, which is produced in a number

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of countries for pharmaceutical purposes, there should be a special exception in the convention allowing its production outside the small-scale facility for the production of schedule [1] super-toxic lethal chemicals, provided that the facilities for its production are made subject to the verification régime envisaged for the small-scale facility. We would like to hope that this step of ours will be of help in solving the problem.

There is, as is known, yet another difficulty connected with schedule [1] chemicals; it relates to the laboratory synthesis of those chemicals. We believe that, in the search for a solution to this issue, there is at least one obligatory condition that cannot be ignored: both the production and the laboratory synthesis of schedule [1] chemicals must be carried out under strict international control.

Now, I would like to share with you some considerations aimed at settling the issue of schedule [2] chemicals, that is, of key precursors. The issue of the capacity of the key-precursor production facilities which would be subject to declaration and systematic international verification is as yet unresolved. We propose setting a threshold of 1 tonne a year. In other words, all installations (facilities) with a capacity in excess of 1 tonne a year would be subject to declaration and systematic international verification.

Agreement has already been reached in the negotiations on initial visits to declared installations (facilities) for the purposes of familiarization with them, verification of the correctness of the declared data (capacity, chemicals produced, plant specifications, etc), and determination of the verification procedures for these installations (facilities). The International Inspectorate will, on the basis of the installations' specifications, determine the frequency of inspections within a range of one to five inspections a year.

We believe that this capacity "threshold" combined with the "ceiling" on the number of inspections is optimal in terms of striking a balance between the effectiveness of verification on the one hand, and its non-intrusiveness on the other. We also take into account the views expressed in this connection by other participants in the negotiations.

A similar approach could be employed as regards schedule [4] chemicals (super-toxic lethal chemicals which are not chemical warfare agents). However, in view of the special nature of these chemicals, the threshold for declaration of the relevant installations (facilities) would be 10 kg a year, while the frequency of inspection would range from one to three inspections a year.

It is a matter of satisfaction to us that practical work has begun on articles X and XI, which the Soviet Union considers very important.

Work has at last begun on the concluding articles of the convention. We hope that it will soon lead to a reduction in the number of "blanks" in the text of the draft convention. One of these articles is to determine the depositary or the depositaries of the convention. We are in favour of the depositary's being the United Nations Secretary-General.

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I would also like to say a few words regarding multilateral data exchange prior to the signing of the convention. This question was first raised in 1983, by the delegation of the United Kingdom. Last year the representative of Australia, Ambassador Butler, also called on all the members of the Conference to declare whether they possessed chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities.

According to our calculations, over 20 States have already stated that they do not possess chemical weapons. Two States, the Soviet Union and the United States have declared that they have chemical weapons.

The Soviet Union has repeatedly been urged to make various declarations regarding its chemical weapons capability. In this context, the reference point has been the information that has been proclaimed by the United States, namely the location of chemical weapons storage facilities and the percentage of various types of chemical armaments. We, for our part, believe that information on the size of chemical weapon stocks is much more important. As is known, we have made that information public. The United States has not as yet provided such data.

Thus, the body of information provided varies between countries. States are motivated by subjective considerations in declaring particular kinds of data.

On 18 February this year, we introduced a Memorandum on multilateral data exchange in connection with the elaboration of a convention on the complete and general prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons (CD/808). In it we have described what would, in our view, be the optimum body of information to be exchanged.

Of course, the document that we have submitted is now being studied by other participants in the negotiations. We hope to hear their views on this proposal soon.

I should like to explain that we do not consider multilateral data exchange as an obligatory prerequisite for the drawing-up of the convention. None the less, such an exchange would undoubtedly be useful both as a contribution to the resolution of the practical problems connected with the preparation of the convention and as a confidence-building measure. With this in mind, we propose the exchange of the body of information envisaged in our Memorandum. It has been defined primarily on the basis of what is needed to solve practical issues connected with the preparation of the convention. It is a kind of a common denominator for a multilateral data exchange. We believe that it is precisely this criterion, rather than data provided by one side alone, that should be the basis for an exchange. From our point of view, it is important that the preparations for a multilateral data exchange should not delay the negotiations on the chemical weapons ban. We see the purpose of a multilateral exchange as being to facilitate and accelerate the conclusion of the convention.

The Soviet Union has already declared that it possesses chemical weapons and the size of its stockpiles, that it has stopped production of these weapons, that there are no Soviet chemical weapons on the territory of other

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countries and that it has not transferred chemical weapons to other countries - that is, it has declared a considerable part of the information to be exchanged at the first stage of the multilateral data exchange. In addition to that, I am authorized to provide the following information:

1. There are on our territory no chemical weapons belonging to other States;
2. We have chemical weapons production facilities;
3. The USSR has not transferred to other States technology or equipment for the production of chemical weapons;
4. The USSR has not since 1 January 1946 received from other States chemical weapons or technology or equipment for their production.

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to all participants in the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons to make additional efforts with a view to identifying the possibilities of finding mutually-acceptable solutions to the outstanding issues in order to complete the elaboration of those provisions of the convention which have not yet found expression as formulas in the future convention.

Early completion of the elaboration of the convention on the complete and general prohibition of chemical weapons will not merely rid humanity of this type of weapons of mass destruction. It will also demonstrate the possibilities of multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament and deprive sceptics of grounds for denying the promising nature of this process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other Member wish to take the floor? I see the representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): The distinguished delegate of the Soviet Union has referred to part of a statement that I have made to this Conference, and I would like, if I may, briefly to respond. He has referred to a comment I made, that I do not understand those who suggest that all we need in our negotiations for a ban on chemical weapons is a final sprint to the finishing line.

With due respect to the distinguished Ambassador, I would suggest that his statement today has amply illustrated precisely why I made that comment. He has described a number of areas where considerable work is still outstanding, and the list is a good deal longer than that. And he has also, I think, well illustrated the complex and complicated nature of those issues. There remain a formidable number of difficult technical problems for us to resolve, and I am therefore uneasy, and my authorities are uneasy, when we are told that a solution is just round the corner, even by May this year has been mentioned. In our opinion, this is simply not feasible. Not if we want a good convention. We, for our part, want a successful end to our negotiations

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as soon as possible, but we want a thorough job, we want the technical problems squarely faced, and we want effective solutions to them. And I think I may say - I hope, without being immodest - that my country has been active in the search for solutions, and I can assure the distinguished Ambassador from the Soviet Union that we shall continue to be second to none. I hope he will forgive me if I add that we would welcome it if the Soviet Union felt able to put forward rather more specific and elaborated studies and proposals about how solutions might be found to the very complicated problems still in front of us. I can assure you that we, for our part, would always be ready to consider such contributions carefully.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for her statement. Does any other delegate wish to take the floor? I recognize the Ambassador of the United States.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): I would certainly echo what Ambassador Solesby has just said far better than I can, but I would like to add that I can well understand the anxiety of the USSR for a speedy conclusion of a convention in order to freeze its chemical weapons advantage in place for many years. But we are simply not interested in that type of activity.

The distinguished Soviet Ambassador mentioned, as he usually does in his speeches, production of binary chemical weapons, which has begun. Yes, it has begun, and it shall continue. The Ambassador knows, as well as I do, that the United States has approved a programme to totally destroy all other unitary stocks, and production of binary chemical weapons will leave the United States with a smaller stockpile than it presently possesses, a stockpile which is far below the level of the largest stockpile in the world, possessed by the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Ambassador talks about concluding work in a sprint, a last-minute run to the finish-line and so forth, and he also mentions that we should all show readiness for mutually acceptable compromise solutions. Ineffective compromise solutions are not what we are interested in here. We do not believe security is compromisable. We are negotiating a treaty to increase our security, not to reach a compromise for the sake of a convention.

The Soviet Ambassador also talks about the search for solutions to political issues. We are not here to solve political issues; we are here to draft a convention that is verifiable. Political issues will be solved in the capitals, not in Geneva.

And finally, I would say that, like the United Kingdom, we are certainly here as a well-motivated delegation that has introduced as many papers as possible trying to speed these negotiations along. The United States the year before last released more information on its chemical weapons stockpile, including the location of production and storage sites. We have repeatedly called upon the Soviet Union to present this information, and all we have received is a very vague statement about their possessing not more than 50,000 tonnes. That tells us exactly nothing. We think that the Soviet Union would be far more forthcoming if they would present the information in a comprehensive nature, as the United States has done.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I see the representative of Mexico, Ambassador García Robles.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): If my delegation had been alone in asking for the floor on an occasion such as this, I would have refrained from speaking. But, since two other speakers have exercised their right of reply, I should like to say a few words about the very eloquent statement that we heard from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

I believe that, as he is not yet - and I say "yet" because we hope that in the near future he will be - a member of the Conference on Disarmament, it may be useful for him to hear from one of its members what the situation is regarding the mandate for an ad hoc committee on the question of a nuclear test ban.

At the forty-first session of the General Assembly - that is, the session that took place in 1986 - a resolution was adopted. At the forty-second session, a further resolution was adopted, that is virtually identical to the earlier one. In the statement with which I had the honour of opening the debate this year, I referred to these two resolutions.

I would like to reiterate here, so that the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway may note it if it seems to him worth taking into account in a future statement on this matter, a point of which my delegation and many others consider it essential that it be quite clear. It must be quite clear that establishing an ad hoc committee and giving it a mandate are not merely a matter of passing the time, a form of diversion. On the contrary, they have a specific objective. What is that objective? That was made clear in the resolution. I have said (I am going to repeat what I first stated in the General Assembly on 12 October 1987, when recalling what I said about the resolution the previous year, and what I subsequently repeated here on 2 February of this year):

"By adopting this draft mandate, the Conference can establish an ad hoc committee 'with the objective of carrying out the multilateral negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty'".

To continue quoting what I said here on 2 February this year:

"'With the objective' is a formula that ... can be interpreted in a wide variety of ways. For my delegation this is an immediate goal, but for other delegations, for instance the delegation of the United States, which has expressed its position on several occasions, it is a long-term objective".

Here I would open a parenthesis: it would appear that for the delegation of Norway it is also a long-term objective,

"Consequently, if the draft mandate were adopted, the delegation of Mexico could make a statement placing its interpretation on record. The United States delegation or any other delegation, could also indicate its

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

interpretation, and in that way the draft mandate could be adopted by consensus without any of the delegations of member States of the Conference having to abandon its position".

Hence, the only thing we want is that it should be quite clear that the mandate that is given to the committee should have as its objective the carrying-out of the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the cessation of all explosions and tests of nuclear weapons. When will this be done? For some delegations it would be at one date, for others it would be at a different date.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement, and would like to tell him that the presidency conducts consultations on item 1. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of Australia, Ambassador Butler.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): I would like to express my delegation's gratitude to the Foreign Minister of Norway for the statement he made this morning. I think my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bill Hayden, would want me to draw particular attention to what the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway said about the issue of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. I refer, in particular, to the third paragraph on page 7 of the English language copy of the Minister's statement, in which he made reference to this Conference establishing an ad hoc committee on a nuclear test ban which, and I quote "should commence work without delay on practical and interrelated issues which in any case need to be addressed in detail before a test-ban treaty can be concluded".

Unlike others, I will not seek to reinterpret what the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway has said, but I would point out that the General Assembly at its last session adopted two resolutions on the issue of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and that one of them, resolution 42/27, entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban-treaty" has, as its central operative paragraph, a four-part proposal to this Conference which is consistent with what the Minister for foreign Affairs of Norway has proposed this morning, that this Conference commence work in an ad hoc committee without further delay on the practical issues involved in the construction of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Resolution 42/27 was adopted by the General Assembly last December with a record majority of votes on any such resolution in the past.

I think my Minister would also want me to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway for what he said today with regard to a global seismological network. As is well known to this Conference, my Minister proposed, about two years ago, the immediate establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of a global seismological monitoring network. What the Norwegian Foreign Minister has made clear to this Conference today is consistent with that proposal, and his offer of Norway's complete co-operation in such a global seismological monitoring network is, of course, most welcome and something for which I think he would allow me to express my delegation's gratitude.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Australia for his statement. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I see the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The reaction that my statement evoked from the distinguished representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States had led me to the thought that perhaps I was insufficiently clear in setting forth some of the aspects in my main statement and, without in any way entering into a polemic with them, I should like to make a few brief additional remarks.

First of all, I cannot fail to express surprise at what the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Friedersdorf, said regarding compromises. As I see it, not to seek compromises means not to seek mutually-acceptable solutions in negotiations, and I cannot imagine negotiations, I cannot conceive of a desire to reach agreement without such a search. Secondly, the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Friedersdorf, once again called on the Soviet Union to provide additional information on its chemical warfare capacity. In today's statement we gave additional information, and the main idea of the Memorandum that we proposed - and I tried to explain this in my statement - is to find some sort of objective criterion for information exchange, for data exchange: not to put forward as such a criterion the volume of information already provided by one side, but to find a body of information that would truly be consistent with the task of accelerating the drawing-up of the convention. In the statement by the United States representative, Ambassador Friedersdorf, doubt was again expressed about the accuracy of the Soviet Union's declaration of its stockpiles, but I will repeat yet again that the Soviet Union's stockpiles do not exceed 50,000 tonnes in terms of chemical warfare agents, and this can be checked immediately after the entry into force of the convention within a time-limit of 30 days. And finally, I should like to point out that the statement by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby, did not explain why, in 1986, the United Kingdom believed in the possibility of concluding the convention in 1987, but now the British side's assessment of the state of affairs in the negotiations has changed and is far more pessimistic even though the number of unresolved problems has, in the meanwhile, been significantly reduced.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Friedersdorf.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): I am surprised at the Soviet Ambassador's surprise. What I was referring to when I referred to compromise was to how the United States regards its security as not compromisable. And we are here to negotiate a convention that increases our security and, I repeat, that is not compromisable.

On the second point, data exchange, what I was calling for was for the Soviet Union to provide to this Conference, as the United States has done, information on the location and number of production and storage facilities of its chemical weapons stocks.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement. Does any other member wish to take the floor? This does not seem to be the case.

I have been asked by its Chairman to announce that the Ad hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will meet in this room this afternoon at 3.45 p.m. instead of 3 p.m.

As there is no other business for today, I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 17 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.