

CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

CCD/PV.603  
26 April 1973  
ENGLISH

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 26 April 1973, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. H.C. Hainworth (United Kingdom)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Argentina:

Mr. C. ORTIZ de ROZAS  
Mr. V.E. BERASATEGUI

Brazil:

Mr. R.S. GUERREIRO  
Mr. P. NOGUEIRA BATISTA  
Mr. F.M. PERRI

Bulgaria:

Mr. P. VOUTOV  
Mr. O. METEV

Burma:

U THAUNG LWIN

Canada:

Mr. W.H. BARTON  
Mr. R.W. CLARK  
Mr. D.R. MACPHEE

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. J. STRUCKA

Egypt:

Mr. H. KHALILAF  
Mr. A.E. KHAIRAT  
Mr. S.A. ABOU-ALI

Ethiopia:

Mr. M. IMRU  
Mr. T. GEBRU

Hungary:

Mr. I. KOMIVES  
Mr. F. GAJDA

India:

Mr. P.K. BANERJEE  
Mr. M.K. MANGALMURTI

Italy:

Mr. N. DI BERNARDO  
Mr. E. GIUFFRIDA  
Mr. P. BRUNI  
Mr. L. RUSSIANI

Japan:

Mr. M. NISIBORI

Mr. H. OKA

Mr. Y. YAMAMOTO

Mr. T. INOUE

Mexico:

Mr. M. MARIN

Mrs. M. PRIETO

Mongolia:

Mr. M. DUGERSUREN

Mr. J. CHOINKHOR

Morocco:

Mr. M.A. KHATTABI

Mr. S.M. RAHHALI

Netherlands:

Mr. M.J. ROSENBERG POLAK

Mr. E. BOS

Nigeria:

Mr. J.D.O. SOKOYA

Mr. A.A. OLUMIDE

Pakistan:

Mr. N.A. NAIK

Poland:

Mr. W. NATORF

Mr. S. TOPA

Mr. A. CZERKAWSKI

Mr. H. BOSAK

Romania:

Mr. C. ENE

Mr. M. MANEA

Mr. A. SASU

Sweden:

Mr. L. ECKERBERG

Mr. U. REINIUS

Union of Soviet Socialist  
Republics

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN

Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN

Mr. V.P. ABARENKOV

Mr. A.N. KASHIRIN

United Kingdom:

Mr. H.C. HAINWORTH

Mr. D.F. DUNCAN

Mr. J.T. MASEFIELD

Mr. R. HOULISTON

United States of America:

Mr. J. MARTIN

Mr. R. KIRK

Mr. R.W. DREXLER

Mr. P. SEMLER

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. CVOROVIC

Mr. H. MIHAJLOVIC

Mr. M. FILIPOVIC

Special Consultant:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

Communiqué of the meeting

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 603rd plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador H.C. Hainworth, representative of the United Kingdom.

Statements were made by the representatives of Sweden, Egypt, Canada, Mexico, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States and by the Chairman.

The delegation of Japan submitted a "Working paper on problems in determining the body wave magnitude" (CCD/399).

The delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Burma, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Sweden and Yugoslavia submitted a "Working paper on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction" (CCD/400).

The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 12 June 1973, at 3 p.m.

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Mr. ECKERBERG (Sweden): On behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Burma, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Sweden and Yugoslavia, I have the honour today to introduce a joint working paper on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction.

The paper has just been distributed to delegations in the form of a conference document (CCD/400), and it will not be necessary for me to read it out at this meeting or to relate its contents in any detail. As is spelled out in the introduction, the paper deals with four important aspects of a treaty banning chemical weapons. In its first part, it lists a number of general provisions which, in the view of the ten delegations, should be included in any agreement banning chemical weapons. In its second part, it deals with the scope of the prohibition, in its third part with verification and the system of control, and in the fourth part with the complaints procedure.

The working paper is being presented on the day when the Conference is adjourning for six weeks. This serves to emphasize the fact that the ten delegations expect that the question of chemical weapons will be given serious attention by Governments during the recess, so that the Committee will be able to start negotiations on this priority item on 12 June, when it reconvenes for the summer session. The paper is submitted as a concrete contribution to such negotiations. It is our hope that other members of this Committee will consider these joint views in the same constructive spirit as that in which they are being submitted and that they will prove broadly acceptable.

May I be permitted to say a few words on another subject, this time on behalf of the Swedish delegation only. At our last meeting, the representative of Pakistan, Mr. Naik, expressed some surprise at the absence of any reference to peaceful nuclear explosions in the Swedish working paper in document CCD/397. I should like to stress that this should not be interpreted as any lack of interest in this problem on the part of my delegation. We would, on the contrary, welcome a thorough discussion of it in the Committee. We feel, however, that the problem is predominantly political in nature. There are obviously a number of important technical aspects interwoven with the political ones, but these aspects are of a special character and would require different experts from those who would deal with the other agenda items proposed by the representative of Japan. As was pointed out by Mr. Naik, it would also be desirable to receive the assistance of IAEA.

(Mr. Eckerberg, Sweden)

We feel that this meeting of experts would not provide the best forum for such a discussion. However, if the delegation of Pakistan, or any other delegation, should propose a special meeting with experts on peaceful nuclear explosions later on this summer, the Swedish delegation will support such a proposal.

Mr. KHALLAF (Egypt) (translated from French): Perhaps I may be allowed, even at this somewhat late date, to welcome in my turn Mr. Barton, the representative of Canada and Mr. di Bernardo, the representative of Italy. My delegation is also happy to see among us Mr. Pastinen as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Mr. Epstein as Special Consultant.

The speakers who have preceded me have noted the existence of a general climate of détente in international relations at the present time, a climate reflected particularly in the recent agreements on Viet-Nam, the improvement in East-West relations, the progress made in SALT I, the beginning of SALT II and, lastly, the initiation of European negotiations at both Helsinki and Vienna.

But the same speakers have also, and we believe rightly, expressed their concern at the state of stagnation that has prevailed in the Conference for over a year. On several occasions they have found it necessary to draw attention to the dangers inherent in that state of affairs for the cause of disarmament in general and for the future of the Conference in particular. What is more, they have expressed their surprise that the Committee should be deadlocked at the very time when the international détente of which I have spoken is taking shape.

This is felt to involve a certain contradiction and it is important for the success of our work to establish whether the contradiction is apparent or real. In other words, we must make an analysis of the causes, both direct and indirect, of the current lack of progress in our work in order to obtain a clear understanding of the present situation and make a better estimate of the possibilities for our future work.

Without going into too much detail, I would merely point out that, in their analysis of the present state of our work, some members emphasize factors relating to the composition and organization of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and to the procedure adopted in this body. As we know, these points have been discussed in some detail in recent years by the Committee, which has even devoted some of its unofficial meetings to them. It will also be remembered that some delegations have made various suggestions to remedy the defects noted in that connexion.

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

Others, however, go further and question whether the conference is capable, particularly at the present time, of meeting the exigencies of the existing state of international relations and the balance of international forces. They add that although, in recent years, the Committee succeeded in solving certain problems, which were more or less peripheral and related to non-armament, it is at this moment incapable of dealing with the thorny and crucial problems of disarmament in the strict sense of the term. From there it is only a step to the conclusion that such problems should be the exclusive or principal preserve of the great Powers.

We would add that the present détente, however noticeable, has not yet materialized generally and to a satisfactory extent -- far from it. In international relations, many clouds still obscure the horizon. In fact, while the situation in some centres of disturbance have become calm, in others it remains inflammable and may lead to an explosion at any time, and the extent of the explosion cannot be delimited in advance nor can its force be determined. One of these centres, perhaps the greatest at the present time, is, as we all know, the Middle East, where an aggressive and expansionist country, aided by a certain great Power, is attempting to substitute the dictates of brute force for the recognized principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations. Recently, some delegations have thought it necessary to draw attention to the imminent danger of that situation for international peace and the cause of disarmament. Thus Mr. Voutov, the representative of Bulgaria, has said that "there are still regions where conditions represent a serious threat to peace. The clearest example is the situation in the Middle East, where the aggressor refuses to comply with the decisions of the United Nations and with the insistent demands of world public opinion to liberate the occupied Arab territories." (CCD/PV.594, p.6) For his part, Mr. Khattabi, the representative of Morocco, has said:

"We cherish the hope that the foundations of a just and lasting peace will also be laid elsewhere in the world, and particularly in the Near East, an area forming part of the Mediterranean basin and constantly torn by the threat of war and disturbances due to the continued military occupation of other peoples' territories, and to the intolerable and inhuman injustice which has stricken a people expelled from its homeland and deprived of its fundamental rights." (CCD/PV.592, p.15)

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

The present détente is thus not general. Nor is it sufficiently far-reaching for its beneficiary effect to be clearly felt in the field of disarmament. Before such an effect can be produced, the détente must be solidly based on a real and well-founded confidence.

These, in short, are the principal reasons generally adduced to explain the climate now prevailing in the Conference. This climate is regarded by some as temporary, because they have not lost hope for the future, since this is by no means the first time that the Conference has encountered difficulties in its path, while others, on the contrary, tend to believe that the present crisis through which the Conference is passing is so acute and affects its very structure so closely that it is becoming increasingly difficult to believe that the Conference can overcome, or even survive it.

Despite the gravity of the situation, we, for our part, hope the Committee will be regarded as a sufficiently important tool to merit special attention. But we believe that, to ensure its future success, certain conditions must be fulfilled.

First, it is necessary to delimit as accurately as possible the respective fields of bilateral, regional and world-wide disarmament, while at the same time establishing the possible relationships between those three types of activities, which essentially serve a common cause, that of disarmament. The Committee is, and should in our view continue to be, the principal tool for multilateral negotiations on disarmament. Yet it should not have any exclusive rights in this field, since there is no reason why there should not, if necessary, be other instruments, which may be of a temporary character, such as world disarmament conferences of the kind which have been approved in principle by the General Assembly (resolutions 2833 (XXVI) and 2930 (XXVII)) and the convening of which has been supported by many countries, including my own. Secondly, it is desirable to introduce as soon as feasible the reforms deemed necessary or useful in the composition, organization or procedure of the Conference. As we see it, one fact is certain: the world has, and for many years will continue to have, a real need for a reliable tool for multilateral negotiations of a universal character in the field of disarmament. In our opinion, the role of the Conference has not been confined in the past -- and should not be confined in the future -- to that of a simple forum or tribune for the discussion of disarmament problems in general terms, because, let me repeat it, this Conference has hitherto been, and should continue to be, an instrument of true negotiation.

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

Yet it must, after all, be admitted that, even with the best possible negotiating tools, the results obtainable are likely to remain somewhat modest or fragmentary until a high degree of security and confidence has been achieved in the international community and above all among the great Powers. But such results, however modest, should by no means be despised pending the advent of better times.

Let us therefore continue along the road we are travelling, however unpropitious the circumstances, but let us always adhere to the priorities which we have set ourselves and which have been very pertinently and regularly recalled by the General Assembly, particularly in its most recent resolutions -- resolution 2933 (XXVII) on chemical and bacteriological weapons and resolution 2934 (XXVII) on the prohibition of nuclear tests. This is also what was recently suggested in the memorandum of the eight non-aligned countries:

"Negotiations in the current phase of the work of the Committee should, therefore, concentrate on the most important questions related to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and not on less pressing matters."

(CCD/396, p.2)

It should be recognized that observance of this order of priorities constitutes a golden rule for the Conference, since some of the problems within its purview are more urgent, important and complex than others and therefore require almost exclusive consideration and exceptional attention if they are to be solved in the best international interests. Moreover, this is a method which has enabled the Conference in recent years to prepare one by one the few draft treaties which it has then been able to submit to the General Assembly. We shall certainly have to proceed along these lines in future, without derogating in any way from the recognized right of every delegation to raise whatever points it may consider useful in the Conference. We therefore do not share the view expressed by some delegations that the problem of conventional weapons should now be taken up by the Conference, because, important though the subject undoubtedly is, it is obvious that if we were to discuss these weapons at a time when we are making no progress with regard to weapons of mass destruction, we might give the impression of jumping from one subject to another and of making a rather pointless addition to the collection of unfinished works already on our shelves, and this might make our task more difficult, not to say hopeless. But, apart from these considerations of expediency, there are other more serious considerations which were mentioned by the representative of Morocco, who said:

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

"The fact is that a final solution to the problem of conventional weapons can be found only in the global framework of general and complete disarmament, not only because this question is of a lesser degree of gravity than that of weapons of mass destruction which, in view of their present super-abundance and continuing development, threaten the existence of human society, but also because the problem of conventional weapons is closely linked to the security, and even to the independence and territorial integrity, of a number of States which do not possess nuclear weapons." (CCD/PV.592,p.20)

We shall revert to that subject in a later statement, if need be.

I now turn to the question of the banning of nuclear tests. Our position on this issue is still the same: we are in favour of all States acceding to the 1963 Moscow Partial Test Ban Treaty and the conclusion of a new agreement on the banning of underground nuclear weapon tests. We believe that the Conference should continue its negotiations on this point, although we should like all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, to participate in these negotiations. This belief is strengthened by the growing signs of an increase in the number of States belonging to the "nuclear club" which, as pointed out by Mr. Voutov, the representative of Bulgaria, is a steadily increasing danger (CCD/PV.601, p.7).

Indeed, the cessation of nuclear tests is a matter of primary concern to all countries, and the efforts exerted to that end, especially by this Conference throughout the twelve years of its existence, have led to the crystallization of certain ideas and trends which are considered extremely useful. It would therefore be in the interests of the entire international community to make use of them.

We believe that the question of the banning of underground nuclear weapon tests should be studied in the light of the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the scientific and technological progress achieved in the matter of seismographic detection and identification and, lastly, of the agreements on data exchange. All this would considerably facilitate our task and make it possible to achieve the complete prohibition of these tests.

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

In the general view, a comprehensive test ban treaty would make a powerful contribution towards halting the nuclear arms race, because it would prevent the development and testing of new nuclear weapons. In this connexion, we hope that the qualitative limitations provided by the SALT I (ABM) agreements, and those which it is hoped will result from SALT II (Offensive Strategic Weapons), will encourage the two super-Powers to accept the idea of the complete ban of nuclear tests, for the halting of the race to achieve qualitative improvements in nuclear weapons should lead, logically, to a reduction in the number of tests of such weapons, if not to the abandonment of tests. According to certain experts on the subject, it must be admitted that the latest technical and political developments are almost decisive in this connexion. It is only necessary to listen to what Mr. Herbert Scoville Jr., a former Assistant Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has to say in The Washington Post of 4 February 1973:

"The accomplishments of SALT I have produced a totally new climate in which a comprehensive nuclear test ban - one covering underground as well as atmospheric explosions - becomes a negotiable arms control measure after nearly 10 years of drifting in the doldrums. Not since 1962, when Nikita Khrushchev made his offer of three on-site inspections to verify such a ban, have opportunities been so good.

"This improved outlook, if we take advantage of it, is particularly timely, since it comes just as steps are needed to prevent further spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries .... The Moscow agreements have thus undercut the major rationale for continued nuclear testing."

Nevertheless, attention should be drawn to the statement recently made in this Committee by Mr. Nisibori, the representative of Japan, who said that "it is one of the undeniably important facts that there exists a threshold below which even the detection of events is impossible, no matter how we improve seismographs and the methods of their use. Here again, what matters is the size of the events."

(CCD/PV.602, p.7)

On the other hand, we support, in principle, the proposal by Japan concerning the holding of informal meetings with the participation of experts, with a view to studying the question of verification. We firmly believe, that far from

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

holding up our work, such meetings would help to expedite it. We also agree with the observation of the representative of Nigeria, Mr. Sokoya, that "the objective of such a meeting should be to clear the ground, in an essentially final sense, for the Committee on Disarmament to negotiate a concrete agreement on a comprehensive test ban". (CCD/PV.594, p.21).

Turning to another priority question on the Committee's agenda, namely, the banning of chemical weapons, I note that the only new development in this respect for at least a year has been General Assembly resolution 2933 (XXVII), which reiterates the request made by the Assembly to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament "to continue negotiations, as a matter of high priority, with a view to reaching early agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and for their destruction", and stresses "the importance of working towards the complete realization of the objective of effective prohibition of chemical weapons",

On 30 March 1972, a draft Convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction was submitted to the Conference by nine socialist countries (CCD/361). This draft is still the only specific proposal before the Committee. The sponsors have pointed out on several occasions that they, to quote the words of Mr. Dugersuren, the representative of Mongolia, "do not, of course, consider their draft as an absolutely perfect one which requires no improvements, additions or amendments. We are listening carefully to the comments made by other representatives and are prepared to give serious consideration to constructive proposals". (CCD/PV.592, p.9).

We adhere to the view we expressed earlier in this Committee that the socialist draft Convention would provide a sound basis for the start of negotiations on the question of chemical weapons. Of course, such negotiations should also draw on the extremely useful documents submitted to the Committee by various delegations and, in this connexion, we accord a special place to the points put forward on several occasions, the last of which was today, either by all or the majority of non-aligned States members of the Committee on Disarmament.

In tackling the question of banning chemical weapons with the documents submitted by the non-aligned countries as a guide, we should seek to reach agreement on a treaty for the general prohibition of these weapons, covering all chemical agents and activities capable of being used for military purposes. We should also adopt a realistic method of establishing the detailed arrangements for the implementation of such a treaty.

(Mr. Khallaf, Egypt)

The prohibition should be based on a clear criterion which would enable us to draw a line between what is permitted and what is prohibited. Such a criterion should not be based on any subjective element, or favour some partial solution to the problem. Thus we would opt for the general purpose criterion, since that eliminates the dangers of subjectivity and discrimination. We fear that the criterion of the toxicity level put forward by the representative of Japan in his statement on 22 March 1973 (CCD/PV.594) would be conducive to a partial solution of the problem. We are, however, convinced that the general purpose criterion would facilitate the task of control without compromising the economic development of the various countries.

Any future treaty on the prohibition of chemical weapons should be accompanied by an adequate system of control enabling the Parties to satisfy themselves that each was faithfully applying the ban. But the system of control should not be unduly irksome to national economic activities in the chemical industry.

Accordingly, our preference is still for a control which would consist in an adequate combination of national and international control and verification measures, which would satisfy the two vital requirements of banning chemical weapons, on the one hand, and promoting the use of chemical agents for peaceful purposes, on the other. International co-operation in the matter of control would be extremely useful where it contributed to an improved verification system and the dissemination of information. Finally, we consider that it would be useful to establish a qualified and independent international body, to be designated by the Contracting Parties, which would be called upon to perform the functions described in the working paper submitted today by some non-aligned countries.

Mr. BARTON (Canada): Early in this session, on 13 March 1973, I put forward some Canadian views on the tasks before this Committee. On this last day of the spring session, it would be easy to give way to discouragement and sound a lament over our apparent inability to take advantage of favourable conditions for progress which many of us referred to as the session opened. That, however, is not my purpose in intervening today.

I propose rather to focus on a matter which gives some promise of making our next session more productive. I refer to the constructive suggestion put forward at our 599th meeting by Mr. Nisibori, the representative of Japan.

Mr. Nisibori has requested that meetings with experts present be scheduled early in the summer session to expedite our efforts to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Canada has consistently supported the convening of such meetings in order to obtain the assistance of national experts in resolving technical issues which have contributed to any impasse in the work of this Committee.

It is now two years since we last sought the advice of experts regarding the technical problems involved in negotiating a comprehensive test ban, and my delegation believes that the time has come for us again to seek an exchange of views among experts in order to clarify some of the issues which remain unsolved. For this reason, we support the request for meetings with experts, submitted by our Japanese colleague. Canada intends to have an expert present for these discussions.

Since differences over verification remain a major obstacle to an underground test ban and active research has continued to be carried out in the area of seismological verification techniques, my delegation believes that the meetings should concentrate on this subject. In support of this, we plan to present a working paper on recent developments in this field. In this regard the working paper on points to be considered on verification (CCD/397), submitted on 24 April 1973 by the representative of Sweden, deserves careful study. In order to allow sufficient time for experts to prepare adequately for this meeting, and for submission and consideration of working papers, my delegation considers that it should not take place before a date well into July.

May I join others who have supported the proposal to convene these meetings in urging all members of the Committee to participate fully in order to ensure progress. This appeal is directed especially to those who possess expertise in the issues to be discussed. We will be tackling the central issue of whether existing seismological techniques can or cannot provide an adequate level of verification, and there is a clear obligation on the part of the proponents of both positions to send experts to

(Mr. Barton, Canada)

join in the discussions and to contribute essential information. We witnessed last year, during a meeting on CW with experts present, the useful exchange of views which such participation permits, representing all points of view, and I hope that the meetings in July will prove to be equally fruitful.

If we are to meet world expectations regarding the negotiation of a ban on nuclear weapons tests, we must demonstrate that we have this year, the tenth anniversary of the PTB, made a serious effort to resolve outstanding issues. I believe the meetings with experts will contribute to this. But, more than ever before, in truth it is up to us.

Mr. MARIN (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): As the representative of the depositary Government of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the delegation of Mexico wishes to make a brief announcement whose importance will be readily appreciated by the members of the Committee on Disarmament.

During the recent visit of President Luis Echeverría to France, that country's Government declared its intention of signing Protocol II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Furthermore, at the end of the visit made by the Mexican Chief of State to the People's Republic of China, the Chinese and Mexican Governments issued a joint communiqué, dated 24 April 1973, which includes the following two paragraphs:

"The Chinese side firmly supports the countries of Latin America in the position they have rightly adopted concerning the establishment of a denuclearized zone in Latin America. The Chinese Government is making the necessary preparations to sign Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco) as soon as possible and at the same time declares that it will do so without prejudice to its position regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty on the partial prohibition of nuclear tests.

"The Mexican side expressed its deep satisfaction at the Chinese Government's decision to sign Additional Protocol II of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America. This decision not only meets the desire for peace and security of the peoples of Latin America but constitutes a highly significant step towards the consolidation of the denuclearized zone in that region and a valuable precedent for the establishment of other similar zones in the world."

(Mr. Marin, Mexico)

Two of the five States to which Protocol II is open -- the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America -- are already parties to it. Today we note with deep satisfaction that two more States have announced their intention of becoming parties in the near future.

Mr. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Committee on Disarmament ends its spring session today. As many delegations have pointed out, the session has taken place in an atmosphere of international detente. While the Committee has been meeting at Geneva, multilateral talks in preparation for a Conference on European Security and Co-operation have been taking place at Helsinki. Unofficial consultations on the problem of reducing armed forces in Europe are proceeding at Vienna, and finally, a second round of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks is in progress here at Geneva. The conclusion of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam and the signature, last March, of the Final Act of the International Conference on Viet-Nam were important developments in the normalization of the world situation. The signing of the agreement on the restoration of peace and the achievement of national accord in Laos is another factor in the settlement of the situation in Indochina.

The whole course of recent events creates a favourable basis for progress in the solution of disarmament problems. But the favourable trend of world events has unfortunately not been duly reflected in the work of the Committee on Disarmament. During the session of the Committee which concludes today, the participants have failed to make any progress towards the attainment of agreement on any question relating to disarmament. Although useful discussions have taken place in the Committee on a number of important disarmament problems, there have in fact been no concrete negotiations with a view to working out an agreement on any of those problems.

The Soviet Union, like many other members of the Committee, is very much concerned at this state of affairs. The lack of progress in disarmament negotiations has a negative political impact. Every member of the Committee on Disarmament is bound to ask why this unsatisfactory state of affairs in the Committee exists. One of the immediate and obvious reasons for the situation is the fact that some Western Powers, and above all the United States, are not showing the necessary interest in the solution of disarmament problems and are making no effort in that direction.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

Anyone reviewing the Committee's work on some problems discussed at this session is bound to come to the conclusion we have reached. It is particularly important that we should appreciate the situation with regard to the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Various aspects of this problem were thoroughly discussed during the previous and the current sessions of the Committee on Disarmament. In March 1972 the socialist countries submitted a proposal on the problem in the form of a draft convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. Technical matters relating to the scope of the prohibition of chemical weapons and to the methods and forms of control over such a prohibition were given full consideration. A large number of working papers on the problem were submitted to the Committee. Informal meetings of the Committee with the participation of experts from a number of countries, including the USSR, took place. To all intents and purposes, however, all this work yielded no tangible results. In response to the socialist countries' proposal, the Western Powers for their part, too, were expected to take practical steps aimed at reaching agreement on this problem. No such steps were taken. The United States and some other Western countries confined themselves to negative, critical comments on the socialist countries' proposal without making any constructive contribution to the settlement of the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons. The negotiations on the question, so eagerly awaited by many countries, did not take place. It is largely because of this situation with regard to the prohibition of chemical weapons that no progress has been made at the current session and that the work of the Committee on Disarmament is virtually at a standstill.

How can we find a way out of this situation with regard to the question of prohibiting chemical weapons? We can do so only if the Western countries take a positive and constructive attitude on this question, an attitude which would give the green light for practical negotiations on the problem. The Soviet delegation and other delegations to the Committee on Disarmament have a right to insist that, during the Committee's forthcoming summer session, the Western countries should remove the difficulties impeding negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Since they have stated that a number of provisions in the draft Convention submitted by the socialist countries are unacceptable to them, they could submit their own formulations of those provisions. Ultimately, they could put forward their own draft convention reflecting their attitude and approach to the problem of prohibiting chemical weapons. We know from our experience of disarmament negotiations that there is also the method

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

whereby a single mutually acceptable text is prepared on the basis of proposal and counterproposal. The continuation of the present stalemate in the matter is liable to have adverse effects on disarmament negotiations as a whole. It is the Western countries, and above all the United States, that are responsible for this situation.

The problem of the complete prohibition of chemical weapons is closely connected with the task of promoting the accession of all States of the world to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare. Accordingly, the Soviet delegation would like once again to call on the United States to make arrangements for speedy ratification of the Protocol in order to ensure maximum effectiveness for this important international instrument. Action by the United States Government for such ratification was announced as far back as 1969 at the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly, but so far there has been no actual progress in the matter.

Nor has there been any progress in the Committee in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament and, in particular, on the prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. The Soviet Union attaches great importance to the solution of this problem. As we have repeatedly stated, the Soviet Union advocates the cessation of nuclear weapon tests, including underground tests, by everyone everywhere. We share the concern of a large number of States at the lack of progress in the solution of this problem. Every effort should be made to move forward towards the complete cessation of all nuclear weapon tests.

On-site inspection, the condition imposed by the United States as a basis for an agreement on this question, remains the obstacle to the solution of the problem of underground nuclear weapon tests. The Soviet Union has pointed out that national means of detection and identification are adequate for verifying the observance by States of their obligations under an agreement on the cessation of underground tests. The international exchange of seismological data could be an additional means of detecting possible violations by States of their obligations in this respect. The Soviet Union has repeatedly declared its willingness to participate in such an exchange within the framework of a treaty on the cessation of underground tests, subject to the observance of certain conditions. We note with satisfaction that many delegations in the Committee have supported the principle of the adequacy of national means for verifying the cessation of underground nuclear tests.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

An important task directly connected with the reduction and removal of the danger of nuclear war is that of inducing a larger number of States to become parties to the existing international agreements on the problem. We note that two nuclear Powers -- the People's Republic of China and France -- are still not parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, signed in Moscow. Many near-nuclear States -- the countries members of Euratom, Japan and others -- are not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by these States is long overdue. The Soviet Union notes with satisfaction that, on 5 April, the safeguards agreement between five Euratom countries and the International Atomic Energy Agency was signed in accordance with article III of the above Treaty. We hope that the signing of this agreement will accelerate the process of ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by these Euratom countries, and will promote the speedy ratification of the Treaty by Japan as well as the early accession to it of other near-nuclear States. The problem of securing the wide participation of States, and particularly of near-nuclear States, in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an important problem requiring a speedy and positive solution. This is largely the key to further progress in reducing the danger of nuclear war.

During the first half of June this year the Committee on Disarmament will meet again for its summer session to continue its consideration of the problems it has been discussing here for the past ten weeks, unfortunately without making any headway. The Committee's main task at the forthcoming session will, in our opinion be to overcome the deadlock in the negotiations on the major issues before it. If progress is to be made in the consideration of these issues, all delegations must be prepared to embark, immediately after the opening of the summer session, on negotiations for the complete prohibition of chemical weapons, the cessation of nuclear weapon tests, and on other problems. It is essential that the Committee should submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session a report containing positive facts on the Committee's work for the solution of disarmament problems. Every effort should be made to end the stalemate in the negotiations on disarmament, to eliminate the stagnation in this field and thus to move towards the solution of the tasks facing the Committee.

(Mr. Roshchin, USSR)

Disarmament is a major problem of international life today. If the international climate is to be significantly improved, substantial efforts will have to be made to settle disarmament problems. The largest possible number of countries of the world and, of course, all the States of military importance, must be involved in the consideration and solution of disarmament problems. This purpose is to be served by a world disarmament conference, the convening of which was considered at the General Assembly sessions of 1971 and 1972. At the latter session, the General Assembly set up a Special Committee to examine all the views and suggestions of States on the convening of a world disarmament conference and to present a report on this question to the Assembly. The Special Committee is meeting in New York today to start its work pursuant to the General Assembly's mandate. The purpose of the Committee's work is to further the main objective, that of convening a world disarmament conference.

This conference would be a forum at which all countries of the world without exception could, on a basis of equality, put forward their ideas and compare them with the views of other countries on disarmament problems in their entirety, both those relating to weapons of mass destruction and those relating to conventional weapons and armed forces. A comprehensive exchange of views at the conference would not only make it possible to identify the positions of all States on the various aspects of the disarmament problem but to determine, through joint efforts, the most effective ways and means of solving it. The conference would undoubtedly make for the greater efficiency of efforts by States to agree on disarmament measures.

As we know, certain difficulties have arisen with respect to the convening of the Special Committee on the World Disarmament Conference because some countries oppose the implementation of the tasks entrusted to the Committee. Whatever arguments may be advanced against the convening of the Special Committee, any obstacle hampering its activities will impede common efforts by States to end the arms race and will, in fact, play into the hands of those who are opposed to negotiations on disarmament and pursue a policy of an arms build-up. We hope that the obstacles that have been raised to hamper the Special Committee's work will be overcome and that the Committee will be in a position to carry out the task entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Mr. Pastinen, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and all his staff for the hard work they have done to smooth the path of the Committee on Disarmament at the spring session which is closing today.

Mr. MARTIN (United States of America): Although today marks the close of our spring session, it will not be long before we resume our work. My delegation looks forward to that resumption and to the continuation of the Committee's deliberations on the complex and important issues with which we are dealing. I want to assure you that the recess will not bring any relaxation in my Government's intensive work on these issues.

The ending of the spring session naturally makes one mindful of the time-consuming nature of our Committee's work. This should not be a source of surprise or despair. Experience has shown that there is no acceptable alternative to the careful and thorough examination of the problems we face and of the possible courses of action open to us. We must do this both individually as Governments and collectively as a Committee. And we must always remember that we are dealing with matters that concern the vital security interests of States and which require stable and enduring solutions.

It is for these reasons that the United States spends substantial periods of time on this work. That we are doing so reflects our seriousness of purpose. It indicates our intent to work for genuinely effective arms control measures. It demonstrates our effort to deal with the pending problems in a realistic, practical manner.

The Committee's deliberations this session have been significant and have contributed towards progress in our fields of common endeavour. We know from past experience that the type of exploratory exchanges that have taken place during this session can facilitate a later process of negotiation. Indeed, it is often only during the actual negotiations that the significance of many months of groundwork and study becomes apparent.

During this session, we have heard important statements on the subject of chemical weapons from a number of delegations. My Government has found them of value. They have assisted us in our continuing intensive work on this subject. In my view, these statements indicate an increased recognition of the importance of developing an appropriate relationship between scope and verification in any measure to control chemical weapons. They evidence the growing awareness of the need for assessing carefully the degree of assurance which various methods of verification can provide and for examining the practical and political implications of such measures.

(Mr. Martin, United States)

I recognize, of course, that there is a diversity of views within the Committee on a number of aspects of the problem. My Government will remain very mindful of these views. We have noted that many delegations have expressed a willingness to consider all realistic and effective proposals that may be put forward. This attitude, in my opinion, is the most helpful way of maintaining a favourable climate for progress.

We have also heard a number of important statements at this session on the subject of a comprehensive test ban. In one of these, Mr. Nisibori, the representative of Japan, proposed that the Committee hold informal meetings with experts during our summer session. We have welcomed the proposal for informal meetings and I am pleased to state today that the United States Government will be sending experts to participate. My delegation intends to help make these meetings a success. We hope that they will promote greater understanding of the verification issue in relation to the comprehensive test ban question. Certainly it is imperative that the members of this Committee continue to work seriously on the major issues related to the test ban. Only in this way can progress be made toward the achievement of an effective CTB.

The United States has for some time advocated an agreement to cut off the production of fissionable materials for use in nuclear weapons and for the transfer of substantial quantities of such materials to peaceful purposes. We have, in addition, proposed that IAEA should be asked to safeguard the nuclear material in each State's peaceful nuclear activities and to verify the continued shutdown of any facilities for production of fissionable material that are closed pursuant to the cut-off agreement. We continue to believe that a cut-off and transfer agreement would constitute a significant limitation in the nuclear arms control field.

Indeed, it cannot be disputed that competition in nuclear arms will never be brought to an end completely until, along with other steps, the nuclear weapon States cease to produce, for weapons purposes, the special materials which are essential to give nuclear weapons their explosive force. Achievement of a cut-off and transfer agreement would, accordingly, be an important step toward realizing the objectives of article VI of the NPT.

(Mr. Martin, United States)

The United States delegation regards with particular interest the statements on a possible cut-off and transfer agreement by the representative of Japan. In his statement of 1 March 1973 on this subject, Mr. Nisibori suggested that agreement on a cut-off might be facilitated if it were to be instituted gradually by enlarging, step by step, the range of nuclear facilities for peaceful purposes that are opened to international inspection. The United States delegation would welcome hearing further comments on this idea.

In my statement at the opening of this session, I pointed to the need for developing constraints with respect to conventional weapons. I am pleased that other representatives have done so as well. I should like to reiterate my Government's view that no single delegation or group can devise a realistic overall plan for global action. All nations bear a responsibility in this area and all must contribute to seeking a solution. For our part, we have already advanced -- in statements to this Committee in 1966, 1970, and 1971 -- a number of principles and guidelines for consideration. We continue to welcome the views of others. It is generally recognized that we cannot achieve long-range arms control objectives without dealing with conventional weapons. What is needed now, in our view, without prejudice to anyone's position on the relative priorities of various disarmament measures, is a discussion of issues and objectives, the development of a common vocabulary and the achievement of a better understanding of the general problem.

We must never lose sight of the fact that all conflicts since the Second World War have been fought with conventional weapons. The problem of their control should not, of course, detract from our efforts regarding weapons of mass destruction. But, at the same time, we must recognize that the passage of time will only make this subject more difficult to deal with. An international organization devoted to the cause of peace, like the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, has a duty to promote a timely exchange of views which might result in effective and mutually advantageous controls over these weapons. My delegation stands ready to help shoulder this duty.

Before the ending of this session, I would like to join Mr. Roshchin, the representative of the USSR, in extending the thanks of my delegation to Mr. Pastinen, Mr. Björnerstedt, Mr. Epstein, Mrs. Gill and to the rest of the members of the highly efficient staff of the Secretariat.

(Mr. Martin, United States)

In conclusion, as this Committee is aware, the United States regards the Committee as a highly important and effective forum for dealing with those arms control and disarmament problems which lend themselves to multilateral solutions. The Committee has a vital role to play in the promotion of peace and security. We have every confidence in the Committee's capacity to fulfil this role.

The CHAIRMAN (United Kingdom): Before we come to the communiqué, there is one other piece of business. I have been requested to read out a statement on behalf of the co-Chairmen which I hope that, in particular, Mr. Barton will find in part responsive to his own statement this morning. The statement is as follows:

"The delegation of Japan has requested that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament hold informal meetings on the question of a treaty banning underground nuclear weapons tests. If agreeable to other members of the Committee, the first such informal meeting would be convened on Tuesday, 10 July, 1973, at 3 p.m."

It was so decided.

That concludes our formal business but before I bang the gavel for the last time, perhaps my colleagues will allow me to make a brief personal statement, taking up in part and expanding on behalf of us all what has already been expressed by our two co-Chairmen. Some of our colleagues are returning to capitals, no doubt to discuss disarmament. Some of them, burdened with many tasks, are remaining here to discharge those tasks; but no doubt they will consider disarmament. Some are going on holiday and I am sure that they too will consider the problems of disarmament. To all of them, and to the members of the Secretariat, those unseen such as the translators and those we see more often, and also to those others whom we see through a glass, darkly, the simultaneous interpreters, allow me to wish a beneficial recess.

The meeting is concluded and the Conference is adjourned until 12 June next.

The meeting rose at 12 noon.