

# CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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## FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 2 August 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wisber Loeis (Indonesia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 470th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to read a message addressed to the Conference by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, His Excellency Soeharto.

"During the month of August Indonesia has the honour for the second time to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. It is particularly significant for Indonesia as on 17 August the Indonesian people will celebrate the 43rd anniversary of national independence.

"The Republic of Indonesia was born in the midst of the suffering resulting from the Second World War, a war which inflicted incalculable material damage as well as the loss of great number of human lives. Conscious of these tragic consequences, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia requires its people to play an active part to prevent another tragedy of this magnitude from recurring by establishing an international world order and promoting the well-being of mankind based on independence, eternal peace and social justice.

"In order to fulfil this constitutional obligation, the People's Consultative Assembly, the supreme state organ and repository of the people's sovereignty, gave me the mandate to conduct a foreign policy aimed at increasing Indonesia's role in helping to solve international problems which endanger international peace and order and which are against justice and humanity, such as the arms race.

"The arms race, in particular as regards nuclear weapons, has reached a stage seriously threatening international peace and security. The international community is very much concerned over that situation, as it can be a cause of frightful war gravely endangering the survival of mankind and its civilization.

"The conclusion of the INF Treaty between United States of America and the USSR could be considered as a first step towards further efforts in achieving general and complete disarmament. Thus, it is hoped that this first step will be followed by further agreements leading towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

"History has testified that great strides achieved in science and technology have brought further improvement to the quality of mankind's life. This advancement undeniably has another aspect that could endanger the survival of mankind and its civilization, as it could be utilized not only to serve development efforts and peace but also for military purposes, especially for the production of weapons of mass destruction. If this situation is allowed to continue, it will result in intensifying the arms race and further exacerbate international security. Furthermore, the arms race continues to absorb the world's finite funds and resources, which are in fact more urgently needed by countries all over the world for their economic and social development.

(The President)

"In overcoming these problems, together we should immediately exert our common endeavour to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Accordingly, I would appeal to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament to enhance its role and fulfil the obligations and duties entrusted to it by the international community to produce concrete results in all fields of negotiation.

"In conclusion, I extend my best wishes to all delegates in your undertakings, and may God speed and guide you towards the achievement of these lofty goals."

This concludes the message from the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

As President of the Conference for the month of August, I should like to thank Ambassador Teja of India for the effective manner in which he conducted our deliberations during July. His diplomatic skills led the second part of the 1988 session to a good start, sorting out a number of procedural issues which are sometimes not easy to settle. Ambassador Teja reviewed, in his closing statement, all pending organizational questions facing us. He did it so ably that I do not need to list them again. Whilst I do not underestimate the difficulties involved, I shall make every effort to deal with them, of course in close contact with the co-ordinators and every one of you. As always, I am sure that I can count on your co-operation to discharge my responsibilities as presiding officer to the best of my ability. I am convinced that I can also fully rely on the assistance of Ambassador Komatina, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Berasategui, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and their staff.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference starts today its consideration of agenda item 5, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". However, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have listed to address the Conference today the representative of New Zealand, and in accordance with the decision taken by the Conference at its 436th plenary meeting, I give the floor to Ambassador Fortune.

Mr. FORTUNE (New Zealand): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to be the first to greet you in your capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament for this month. You represent a country with which New Zealand has historically close ties in many areas of our bilateral relationship. We have the fullest confidence in your ability to guide our work to good purpose this month.

New Zealand wishes to make known its views on a number of issues of importance to the CD this session. It has already been a long year for the multilateral disarmament process, and with a hot summer in Geneva a feeling of exhaustion in the Conference is natural. We hope that this will be a passing

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phase. It must not be allowed to affect the pace and direction of the CD's work. The issues are too important for that. Now is the time to demonstrate the common and deep commitment to global peace and progress in disarmament which we declared at the special session, and subsequently.

The special session has come and gone, and the world of disarmament remains largely unaffected. The recent substantial progress in the bilaterals was noted and warmly endorsed. Like others, we hope it will continue on its present constructive course. But in the multilateral area, nothing has changed. Work continues, to positive end, in negotiations banning chemical weapons. But for the critical nuclear issues, progress remains impeded by two cross-fissures in the international terrain. First, progress in promoting global stability at lower levels of nuclear weaponry remains inhibited by conflicting judgements between the two major Powers over what should constitute the basis of strategic stability in the future. Secondly, in the area of horizontal non-proliferation, progress is stalled by continuing differences of perception over the merits, and role, of the NPT. In the area of disarmament machinery, nothing has changed. The judgement has been made that, notwithstanding the lack of progress recorded over the past decade in multilateral disarmament, the machine is well designed and constructed, and running smoothly enough. New Zealand does not share that view. It is a view which must come as a surprise to an international public concerned with the continuing threat posed to its own survival by nuclear weapons.

I have to confess that New Zealand is not of the school of thought which sees the special session as even a modest success. If the special session has bequeathed any lesson at all, it is that in the world of common security, we must not be deaf to the words of others. In the aftermath of the special session, the CD remains there to be used. If global security is ever to be fully realized, it is in the CD that the critical multilateral steps must be taken. It remains open to members and other interested States to use it to good and constructive effect. This remains the perennial challenge, and it will not go away.

New Zealand wants to play a full and constructive part in that process, but, as members will know, we continue to feel inhibited about this under the CD's current rules. At the special session, New Zealand together with Denmark and Ireland advanced some suggestions on how the CD could facilitate further participation by observer States. The ideas raised drew inspiration from the report of the Group of Seven submitted to the CD in April. We endorse the recent suggestions that the CD take up the Group's report and seek to reach agreement on at least some of its proposals. We hope that the participation of observers will feature in those proposals. My delegation would certainly be happy to elaborate on the issue in informal discussion.

Mr. President, much comment has been advanced over the years, not least at the special session last month, over what is called the autonomy of the Conference on Disarmament. New Zealand would like to make its views on this quite clear. It is true that the Conference, in its various previous incarnations, was conceived and created as a separate organ, independent of the United Nations system. Nor has any formal change to that heritage been instituted. But the CD must not be seen to operate as an autonomous body. To do so implies that the body, with its 40 member States, has interests that are

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sovereign from the international community as a whole. Whatever its history, the Conference on Disarmament negotiates today on behalf of the entire international community. Nobody denies that a collapse of the international security system today would bring consequences on a global scale. That being so, the CD must be seen, not as an autonomous sovereign body, but as accountable to the United Nations membership as whole.

I wish now to turn to the most important items on the CD's agenda. It is four years since a committee was last established to deal with the nuclear test ban item. This is an admission of failure on the part of the Conference. Those who are committed to an early comprehensive test ban prefer immediate negotiations. Those who see a CTB as a long-term goal prefer substantive work in the Committee which falls short of negotiations. No common ground has been found, and no work commences as a result.

Let us take a lesson from the special session and seek the common ground. Let discussion commence in the Committee on a mandate which includes, as a first item in the work programme, the role of a test ban in the disarmament process, including the timing of such a ban within that process. That will enable those who see good reason for deferring a CTB to explain to the Conference the reasons why it should be deferred. It will enable those who see merit in the urgent conclusion of a CTB, including New Zealand, to explain why testing should cease now. This can only serve to air the issue afresh and hopefully allow a better understanding to be gained. If nothing else, that much would represent progress.

In the chemical weapons committee work continues toward the conclusion of a global and comprehensive convention banning all chemical weapons. New Zealand recognizes the technical difficulties that lie in the path of a successful convention. We do not believe, however, that the conclusion of a convention before long is beyond our reach. Complex technical obstacles can be overcome with impressive rapidity, as the successful INF negotiations demonstrated. That achievement should serve as an inspiration for the negotiations before us. With due regard to the complexities of multilateral negotiations, the same applies in the area of chemical weapons. In the meantime, and in order to expedite the conclusion of the convention, further measures of transparency will be important. In this regard, as the most recent such measure, we especially welcome the initiative taken last week by the Government of the United States in making a declaration relating to its chemical weapon production facilities.

The outer space committee deals with one of the most important issues before the international community today. In New Zealand's view, there is considerable scope for work to be expedited within the Committee. The most effective way of preventing an arms race in outer space is to ensure that no weaponry is ever deployed there. For four decades the world has sustained what has been described as global stability without weapons in outer space. The further strengthening of global stability should proceed within that same constraint. The Charter of the United Nations of itself, will not prove sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space, any more than it has proven sufficient to contain a nuclear arms race on Earth. The Charter has been supplemented by nuclear arms control agreements such as the partial test ban Treaty and the NPT. It has also been supplemented by the outer space Treaty -

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not undermined or made redundant by these treaties, but supplemented and strengthened by them. Nuclear weapons are deployed on Earth in the name of the self-defence provisions of the Charter. The same logic could allow nuclear weapons to be deployed in outer space. But the international community has banned this in the outer space Treaty. It is clear, therefore, that the right to deploy nuclear weapons in the name of self-defence is not irrevocable, but may be, and has been, forfeited in certain circumstances in the common interest. The same logic can apply to all weaponry in outer space. Technical problems such as definitions and verification are not insoluble.

The NSA committee has received some interesting proposals in recent sessions, and a new sense of purpose appears to be developing. New Zealand follows this issue with close attention, since extending and consolidating negative security assurances, consistent with the imperative of strategic stability, should be seen as one of the cardinal objectives in the move towards an alternative and safer international security system. In New Zealand's view, the security of non-nuclear-weapon States will not be enhanced merely by listing the current unilateral assurances in the non-binding General Assembly resolution. We would prefer to see the new assurances reduced to an agreed formula, preferably in a formal international instrument. In our view there is, in fact, less that divides the five NSA formulae than meets the eye. It is New Zealand's hope that the new atmosphere that has characterized the bilateral relationship in arms control in the past year can be brought to bear on the critical issue of negative security assurances. A breakthrough in these negotiations could yet be found.

These are, in my Government's view, the most important issues before the CD at present - nuclear testing, chemical weapons, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances. At present, progress is discernible in only one of them. In two others, progress could be expedited towards the common goal if the constructive approach displayed in the bilateral negotiations can only be brought to bear on the multilateral machinery. The same spirit, if transferred from the bilaterals to the multilaterals, would get an NTB committee going. This transference of spirit, of course, was the aspiration of the third special session. It is an aspiration left unfulfilled. But it is not beyond the imagination and capability of the Conference to fulfil it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement as well as for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. Does any other Member wish to take the floor at this stage?

As I have 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, 4 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.