

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 16 August 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wisber Loeis (Indonesia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 474th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference begins this week its consideration of agenda item 4, "Chemical weapons". However, as provided for in 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 on the list of speakers for today the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom. I give the floor to the first speaker on the list, the distinguished representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ambassador von Stülpnagel.

Mr. von STULPNAGEL (Federal Republic of Germany): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your stewardship, I first wish to congratulate you and your delegation on your assumption of the presidency for the month of August. My colleagues and I are happy, from a professional and from a personal point of view, to see you in the Chair presiding over the debates of our Conference. I also wish to thank our previous President, Ambassador Teja, whom we will be missing very much, for the excellent manner in which he presided over our sessions in the month of July. Let me extend a warm welcome to those ambassadors who have arrived recently, and I refer in particular to you, Ambassador Loeis of Indonesia, Ambassador Kostov of Bulgaria, Ambassador Ruoro of Kenya and Ambassador de Rivero of Peru. I would also like to welcome the Disarmament Fellows who watch over the proceedings of our Conference before they travel to the various countries that have invited them.

My colleagues and I note with regret that some of us have left Geneva or are to leave it in the near future, in particular my good friend Ambassador Mansur Ahmad of Pakistan, whose excellence and diplomatic skills I will always remember, Ambassador Tin Tun of Burma, Ambassador Teja of India, to whom I already have referred, and Ambassador Meiszter of Hungary, who in an excellent and balanced manner presided over our Conference in April and guided us in the months of May and June.

On 14 April 1988 I had the honour to introduce on behalf of a group of Western countries a working paper on the provision of data relevant to the convention banning chemical weapons. In presenting the paper I stressed that the multilateral exchange of data prior to the signing of a convention is not only a confidence-building measure but also a necessary prerequisite for drafting an effective convention and ensuring its early functioning. Since the submission of the paper some welcome steps have been taken. I would like to draw attention in this regard to the Netherlands working paper CD/CW/WP.203 of 19 July 1988, which provided detailed information according to the format proposed in CD/828; the declaration of the location of chemical weapons production facilities in the United States by Ambassador Friedersdorf on 28 July 1988; and the detailed presentation by the United Kingdom on the production of schedule [2] and [3] chemicals in CD/CW/WP.206 of 10 August 1988.

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

By taking these steps Western States have once again demonstrated their commitment to more openness and transparency - concepts we consider to be essential in all fields of arms control and disarmament.

Today I would like to present the data for the Federal Republic of Germany according to the proposed format in CD/828. These data are contained in a working paper which has just been distributed. I would first like to reiterate a statement my Government has made on a number of occasions in this forum and elsewhere: the Federal Republic of Germany does not possess chemical weapons. Nor are chemicals contained in schedule [1] of article VI being produced in my country.

According to information provided on a voluntary basis by companies in the chemical industry, four compounds on schedule [2] and, with the exception of chlorpicrin, all compounds on schedule [3] are currently being produced, processed or consumed in the Federal Republic of Germany. On the basis of the thresholds for declaration proposed in working paper CD/802 of 5 February 1988, these 15 compounds are produced, processed or consumed in 52 facilities. The data reflect the situation at the beginning of 1988, and are subject to change depending on market conditions and developments in the state of technology.

I hope that in our negotiations we are only at the beginning of a process, at the end of which all States members of the Conference on Disarmament will have submitted data on their chemical industries and their chemical weapon capabilities. The provision of data is not only a necessary contribution to the negotiation and effective implementation of the provisions of a chemical weapons convention. It will also give all participants the reassurance that the negotiations are being carried out in good faith. In this context, we regret that - despite the noticeable increased recognition of the importance of greater openness - a number of members of the Conference on Disarmament have not yet indicated as a first step whether or not they possess chemical weapons. I would therefore like to reiterate my call to all participants to provide as soon as possible data relevant to the chemical weapons convention.

On the occasion of the presentation of CD/828 I expressed my conviction that a multilateral exchange of data would have a positive effect on the course of our negotiations. Reviewing the current state of our negotiations, I cannot conceal my disappointment over what we have been able to achieve so far this summer. Although pleased by the business-like atmosphere prevailing in our negotiations - and here I fully share the view expressed by Ambassador Marchand in his speech on 4 August 1988 - I continue to be concerned about the lack of progress on a number of issues. Let me briefly review the state of affairs during this summer session and our assessment of it.

The Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Sujka, and the chairmen of the working groups, Mr. Cima of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Macedo of Mexico and Mr. Numata of Japan, have made strenuous efforts to move the negotiations forward. We are very grateful to them for their commitment, energy and excellent work.

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

In Working Group A under the chairmanship of Mr. Cima a number of important issues concerning the non-production of chemical weapons have been addressed. The discussions on some of the long-standing problems have certainly contributed to clarifying the positions. We deplore, however, the fact that the discussions have not yet resulted in the elaboration of solutions which are not only acceptable to all but would meet the criteria for the establishment of an effective verification mechanism. In this regard I am thinking particularly of the deliberations on the régime for schedule [1] and the so-called STLC problem, where regrettably demands continue to be made which ignore the need to arrive at feasible and effective solutions that take account of the basic question of what is realistically verifiable.

In Working Group A we have also had a very interesting discussion on the concept of ad hoc checks, which was originally proposed by us in working paper CD/791. I do not wish to elaborate here on our thinking on this issue. We have done that on a number of occasions in the past weeks. We will reflect on the interesting comments which have been made, and intend to present more specific ideas on a régime for ad hoc checks in the framework of article VI soon.

On 22 July 1988 we had an interesting meeting with industrial experts. I hope that this meeting was only the start of a more intensive dialogue with representatives of the chemical industry. I am convinced that such a dialogue can contribute to better mutual understanding between negotiators here in Geneva and the chemical industry, which will necessarily be subjected to stringent and effective monitoring to ensure the non-production of chemical weapons. I am likewise convinced that it will be very fruitful for our task to elaborate a comprehensive, effective and at the same time manageable article VI. As the discussion on 22 July 1988 clearly showed, more detailed exchanges with representatives of the chemical industry on such issues as the protection of confidential information are needed. I am gratified to say that the chemical industry of the Federal Republic of Germany, with which we have close and long-standing contacts, shares without reservation our priority objective of achieving a comprehensive and effectively verifiable ban on chemical weapons.

Let me make a brief comment also on the question of trial inspections in the chemical industry. We welcomed the proposal made to that effect on 18 February of this year by Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Such inspections, carried out on a multilateral basis, will provide us with information and insights which will certainly turn out to be most helpful and possibly indispensable for working out procedures for conducting inspections in facilities of the chemical industry. We are willing to participate in such a multilateral experiment. At the moment the issue is being closely examined by my Government, and preparations for a possible national experiment are under way. We endorse the emerging consensus on a step-by-step approach to the issue. We would welcome the establishment of an informal group which could prepare for multilateral trial inspections. In such a group experience acquired in the course of efforts undertaken nationally could be exchanged, and as a result a standardized approach for the multilateral experiment could be elaborated.

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

Let me now briefly turn to the work in groups B and C. We had hoped that during the summer session it would be possible, in an effort to finalize article V, to introduce elements of the joint proposal by the United States of America and the Soviet Union on chemical weapon production facilities into the "rolling text". We understand, however, that efforts made to this end have run into difficulties. We strongly support the Chairman of Working Group B, Mr. Macedo, in his intensive endeavours to resolve the difficulties so that the appropriate amendment to the text of article V can be made in the course of this summer session.

With regard to article X, another subject on the agenda of Working Group B, we note with regret that the negotiations have somewhat retrogressed. The discussion paper on this article now contains a number of brackets and footnotes that point to positions which, it seems, are difficult to reconcile. We urge continuation of the work on that article in a spirit of compromise, and also with a sense of perspective. We should never lose sight of the main goals of the convention we are negotiating, and what can realistically be undertaken to achieve these goals.

With quite some interest we have followed the work undertaken in Group C under the chairmanship of Mr. Numata. We consider the paper which resulted from the discussion on the process after the submission of the report on challenge inspections to be a good basis for solving the issue or coming close to it. We hope that it will be reflected in the report of the Ad hoc Committee to the Conference on Disarmament.

With regard to the sometimes rather protracted and detailed discussions on the guidelines on the international inspectorate, I am convinced that we have to undergo such an exercise, which has proved to be useful and has also brought to the surface some detailed problems we have to come to terms with. I would like to encourage Mr. Numata to pursue the sometimes difficult and very time-consuming consultations on the subject. They will contribute substantially to better understanding of inspection procedures, and will also help to resolve the remaining issues with regard to on-site challenge inspections.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Sujka, for actively working on the final clauses of the convention. We welcome the revised discussion paper he put forward last week, which, we hope, will provide a basis for making progress on articles XII to XVI. The past discussions on these articles have clearly shown that some very important issues are involved which deserve our particular attention, as a solution of these issues will have a direct bearing on the viability and effectiveness of the convention. In this regard I would only like to mention the question of reservations and amendments, on which a lot of the discussions in the open-ended informal consultations conducted by Ambassador Sujka have focused, bringing out the differences.

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

In conclusion I would like to call upon all participants to make the best use of the remaining time available this summer to achieve concrete progress in our negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. We should make every effort to set the stage and create the best conditions for a promising continuation of our work in any inter-sessionals we may decide to hold starting toward the end of this year.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador von Stülpnagel for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom, Ambassador Solesby.

Ms. SOLESBY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I first congratulate you on your accession to the presidency? It seems not a very long time ago that I had the pleasure of welcoming you as a newcomer. But you have taken over the reins of power with the confidence and sure touch of an old-timer, if I may say so. It is a particular pleasure to have the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia in the presidency, a country with which my own has long-standing close and friendly relations. May I also repeat my earlier expressions of warm appreciation for the leadership given us during July by Ambassador Teja of India?

We are now approaching the last phase of the summer session of the Conference on Disarmament. In the aftermath of the third special session of the General Assembly there has been a general determination to build upon its positive aspect, especially the convergence of views on a wide number of issues. The mood has been: let us get on with the business in hand. And we have done so.

I would like this morning to speak about one aspect of that "business in hand", namely the negotiations for a convention banning chemical weapons. The conclusion of a global, comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention is one of the highest priorities in the arms control and disarmament programme of the British Government as of our NATO allies. We want a convention as soon as practicable. But it must be a good convention, in which we can have confidence. A number of difficult and complex problems remain to be resolved, and this morning I would like to consider two of them: verification and data exchange.

The need for a reliable system of verification lies at the heart of our negotiations. It is the key to a convention. We have made a lot of progress. We can say with some satisfaction that, whatever fine tuning may be required, our "rolling text" provides the basis for a credible procedure for verifying declared activities relating to schedules [1] and [2]. So a good deal is already accomplished.

One reservation has to be made, however, as regards these schedules. The chemical agents so far listed under schedule [1] and indeed schedule [3] are for the main part the traditional chemical agents familiar in the First and Second World Wars and developed further in the 1950s. One or two comparative newcomers such as saxitoxin have also been proposed, but the lists need at

(Ms. Solesby, United Kingdom)

some stage to be reviewed to make sure they are complete. We also have to provide adequate procedures for modifying the schedules in order to keep pace with technological advances.

Outside schedules [1] and [2] the gaps in verification procedures are also wide. At present for example there is no provision for routine on-site inspection in relation to schedule [3]. Nor so far has provision been made for non-confrontational inspection of undeclared facilities. The valuable proposal by the Federal Republic of Germany for ad hoc checks has pointed in the direction of a possible solution. However, the concomitant idea of national registers still leaves us with the problem of facilities wholly undeclared for the purposes of a convention - in other words, facilities which should be declared in accordance with the annexes to article VI or included in any national registers but which are not. Ad hoc checks as conceived at present are clearly not the whole answer. All this calls for further hard thinking. My delegation hopes in due course to table some detailed ideas of our own.

A major achievement in the negotiations has been the convergence of views in support of a system of challenge inspection. The main framework is in place. However, as we have long argued, challenge inspection is the essential safety net for the convention. It cannot by its nature replace the need for a comprehensive and resilient routine régime.

I have so far been speaking about verification mechanisms. There is also the question of conduct of on-site inspections which remains to be tackled in a good deal greater depth than has been done so far. Inspections have to be as intrusive as necessary in order to fulfil their purpose effectively. On the other hand we must recognize legitimate concerns about confidentiality. How can these criteria be reconciled? Here again we have to bear in mind not only the well-known classical chemical weapon agents but any possible newcomers. A lot more innovative thought is required. And private industry has a contribution to make. We are in close and regular contact with our own industry who show a good understanding for the requirements of the convention. Part of the solution may lie in verification instrumentation. Interesting advances are being made through both private and official research. More needs to be done. What is clear, however, is that verification technology in the foreseeable future is not going to replace the need for on-site inspection. We will need a two-legged instrument for a long time.

If what I have said is anywhere near the truth, there are a number of vital questions where we are still groping for answers. Is there anything more we can do that is not yet being done to bring us to the point where we can provide those answers? I think there is. It is my belief - and that of my authorities - that the Conference has reached the phase in its work where our concepts need to be put to the test, as realistically as possible, to see how far they work and to attempt to identify improvements. We need to move from theory to experimentation. We have to test major links in the verification chain, especially those which seem the weakest, in order to establish whether they can take the weight of what we require of them and whether they can be strengthened.

(Ms. Solesby, United Kingdom)

My own authorities have for some time been considering the possibilities of practice inspections of relevant facilities. We see the initial phase of these practice inspections as being undertaken at a national level. Procedures will first have to be carefully prepared if the experiments are to be worth while. Inspections may have to be both of a "walk-through" nature with a co-operative facility management, and in a scenario where the management is doing its best to conceal and misguide.

We would hope that national practice inspections in the civil industry would be followed by multilateral inspections, and we have already welcomed the proposal made by the Soviet Union in this regard. This will require close contact and co-operation among the members of this Conference. I am pleased that the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is already consulting about suitable machinery for this. My own delegation will be happy to participate fully.

The INF Treaty has established an important precedent for intrusive verification measures. We look for progress in the nuclear area from the joint verification experiment now under preparation by Washington and Moscow. Let us apply that experience to our own efforts to ban chemical weapons.

The second aspect of the negotiations for a convention on which I should like to comment is data exchange. I think it is now widely accepted that provision of accurate data is essential, particularly on the part of those who hold the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons. We need additional data to enable us to draft a sensible convention. Equally important, credible data is essential in order to build up the necessary level of confidence in each other's intentions if a convention is to attract widespread support.

For our part we have just conducted what I believe has been an extremely significant experiment. The British Government in 1986 proposed an exchange of visits between Porton Down Chemical Defence Establishment in the United Kingdom and the Shikhany military facility in the Soviet Union. This has just taken place. We were pleased to welcome the Soviet team to Porton Down in May, and a British team was received at Shikhany in early July. Porton Down is engaged solely in research and development for protection against chemical weapons. We aimed at the maximum openness during the visit there. Our visitors were able to go anywhere they chose and they expressed their satisfaction at the end of the visit. At Shikhany we were shown more than during the shorter visit by Conference on Disarmament delegates last October. However, we were made aware of the different attitudes towards the degree of secrecy appropriate in this area. My authorities are still assessing the exchange which was intended as a confidence-building exercise. Much more progress is required towards the sort of openness which our negotiations need. Many questions and concerns remain.

Of course the provision of data does not just depend on visits. We would hope each country, especially the possessors of chemical weapons, would provide the maximum amount of data to its negotiating partners as quickly as possible. The Soviet Union proposed a list of types of data in CD/808 and the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of a number of Western countries

(Ms. Solesby, United Kingdom)

including the United Kingdom tabled a much more comprehensive list in CD/828. My authorities have already provided this data but we are ready to repeat and update the information.

The following are our responses to the data requested in CD/828. First, as is well known, the United Kingdom abandoned its own offensive chemical weapons capability in the 1950s. Delegates from this Conference were invited to see the destruction of our disused pilot nerve agent facility at Nancekuke in Cornwall in 1979. We described in CD/15 some of the problems that had needed to be overcome then.

Against that background our responses to the questions concerning chemical weapons and chemical warfare agents are as follows. Firstly, the United Kingdom does not possess chemical weapons either within its own territory or within the territory of any other State. There are no chemical weapons possessed by any other State within the territory of the United Kingdom. Secondly, the United Kingdom possesses no facilities for the production or storage of chemical weapons. Thirdly, limited quantities of chemicals itemized in the provisional list of chemical warfare agents in schedule [1] to article VI can be prepared at the United Kingdom's Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down for research and development for protection equipment. The quantity of each such chemical present at CDE Porton Down at any one time is small. Fourthly, old munitions or agent discovered within the United Kingdom are removed to CDE Porton Down for destruction at a small-scale destruction facility there. It has a capacity to destroy about 35 kg of toxic agent at any one time.

CD/828 also requested information on a number of facilities in the civil chemical industry that might be relevant to the convention. Legislation does not exist in the United Kingdom to compel private industry to provide this information to government. However, the United Kingdom Chemical Industries Association has provided information on its member companies which produce schedule [1], [2] and [3] chemicals. This information may be summarized as follows. Firstly, there is one company producing schedule [1] chemicals (small amounts of nitrogen mustard for medical use). Secondly, there are four companies producing schedule [2] chemicals. Thirdly, there are five companies producing schedule [3] chemicals. More detailed information is set out in CD/CW/WP.206, which is being circulated to distinguished delegates.

As a further demonstration of our commitment to openness in this area we have compiled an account of production in the United Kingdom of chemical weapon toxic agents during the Second World War and in the years afterwards up until 1956 when we gave up our chemical weapons capability. This account sets out the type and amounts of agents produced and location of the then production facilities. It also describes our experience in dismantling production facilities. I have pleasure in circulating this information to distinguished delegates as CD/856.

(Ms. Solesby, United Kingdom)

Until the convention we are negotiating has come into force and has been, as we hope, universally ratified, the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons remains an instrument of considerable importance. My Government has been dismayed by recent instances in which chemical weapons have been used. The reaction of the international community has, in our view, been quite inadequate. In the last few days media reports have alleged still further grave use of chemical weapons.

My Foreign Secretary during the third special session of the General Assembly made a number of proposals to strengthen the effectiveness of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. His first proposal was that any Government not yet a State party of the Geneva Protocol should seriously consider acceding. It is worth my repeating this point here as some members of the Conference on Disarmament have still to become States parties. His second proposal concerned the investigation by the United Nations Secretary-General of allegations by Member States of chemical weapons' use. Sir Geoffrey Howe proposed that the Secretary-General should elaborate without delay "procedures for investigating automatically allegations of chemical weapons' use". He added that such investigations should be "undertaken as a matter of routine and without getting entangled by political considerations". We much hope that the group of experts now meeting in this same building will agree on procedures for an automatic United Nations investigatory procedure. My Government has submitted for the attention of the group a paper setting out our views.

Important as it is to reinforce the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the best way of preventing the use of chemical weapons lies in the efforts of this Conference to negotiate a comprehensive, global and effectively verifiable ban on chemical weapons. I hope that what I have said underlines the determination of my Government to press ahead energetically with these negotiations. Such a ban is a prize for which the world has long striven. It is worth a very considerable effort.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Solesby for her statement and for the kind words she addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? The representative of Pakistan has asked for the floor. I give him the floor.

Mr. ASIF EZDI (Pakistan): On 9 August I informed the members of the Conference of Pakistan's firm and abiding commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and outlined the proposals made by Pakistan to India for keeping the South Asian region free of nuclear weapons. In a statment on 11 August, the distinguished representative of India, exercising the right of reply, questioned the appropriateness of this forum for raising these issues, which he said were of a strictly bilateral character. Distinguished delegates to this Conference will be familiar with this argument, though in a different context. They will recall that this kind of logic has also been used by some members of the CD belonging to a different group to deny this Conference its due role as the single multilateral negotiating forum of the international community. We are disappointed that the delegation of India too should now be resorting to the same reasoning.

(Mr. Asif Ezdi, Pakistan)

Nuclear proliferation is a matter of universal concern, as noted in the Final Document adopted by consensus in 1978 at the first special session devoted to disarmament. Last month several delegations took the floor to make statements on the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the non-proliferation Treaty. A few others have officially circulated documents on this subject. Concern about nuclear proliferation in South Asia has been expressed in several quarters. The members of the Conference on Disarmament therefore have a legitimate interest in this question. Pakistan's proposals in this regard will, we hope, make it clear that we are sincere about keeping our region free of nuclear weapons.

It should also be evident from the statements made by my delegation and by the distinguished representative of India that mutual suspicions do exist about the nuclear programme of the other country. These suspicions can only be made worse by allegations and counter-allegations. We did not, therefore, make any such accusation about India's nuclear programme. On the contrary, we only mentioned proposals made by Pakistan in a constructive spirit with the aim of dispelling these doubts and suspicions.

It would be odd to link the nuclear problem between Pakistan and India, as the distinguished representative of India attempted to do, to "specific factors attending the partition of the subcontinent". The origin of this particular problem can be traced to 1974, when India carried out its nuclear explosion. There are indeed other problems which arose on partition. We will not, however, raise these problems here, as appropriate multilateral forums exist for doing so.

The distinguished Indian representative referred to the "open character" of its nuclear programme, "in sharp distinction to that of Pakistan". Such an assertion will carry little conviction in view of the secrecy surrounding the Indian nuclear explosion of 1974 and India's adamant refusal to accept full-scope safeguards on its nuclear programme, to mention two points only. If India's nuclear programme is indeed of an open character, as the distinguished Indian representative stated, India should have no hesitation in accepting our proposals for simultaneous acceptance by the two countries of full-scope safeguards or for mutual inspections of each other's nuclear facilities.

We would agree that the improvement of Pakistan-India relations is not dependent on the nuclear question alone. Unhappily, it is true that there are several other issues as well. We will continue to avail ourselves of every appropriate multilateral and bilateral forum in our efforts to resolve these issues.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I see none.

As there is no other business for today, I shall adjourn this meeting, but before doing so I should like to recall that on Thursday, following the plenary, there will be an informal meeting to discuss all aspects of the

(The President)

question of the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. I should also like to note that I have been informed that as of Wednesday 17 August, and until further notice, the Council Chamber and the adjoining rooms, rooms I and C.108, will be needed in connection with the direct talks relating to Iran and Iraq. Room VII will be set up in a negotiating format to accommodate the Conference on Disarmament and its subsidiary bodies, and rooms A.206 and A.302 will be made available to the Conference upon request for informal consultations to replace rooms I and C.108. Room III will continue to be available to the Conference as in the past. Accordingly, the plenary meeting of the Conference scheduled for Thursday 18 August, as well as the meeting of the Ad hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, will take place in conference room VII, on the third floor. I have also been requested to announce that there will be a meeting of the contact group of the CPD on nuclear-weapon-free zones today after the plenary meeting in room C.108.

The meeting rose at 11. a.m.