

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.471
4 August 1988

ENGLISH

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

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 4 August 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Wisber Loeis (Indonesia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 471st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

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

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Austria, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Canada, Venezuela and Bulgaria. In accordance with the decision taken by the Conference at its 436th plenary meeting, I now give the floor to the representative of Austria, Ambassador Ceska.

Mr. CESKA (Austria): Mr. President, it is a privilege for me that my first intervention before the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament should take place under your chairmanship. May I join those who have congratulated you on assuming this responsibility for the month of August 1988, and offer you my best wishes for success?

In thanking you for having given me the floor I wish to concentrate my intervention on aspects of a possible ban on chemical weapons. This matter having been on the agenda of the CD and the CCD for almost 20 years, the history of negotiations on chemical weapons here in Geneva is a long one, with its ups and downs, with long periods when nobody really believed that an agreement was possible, given the complexity of the matter. And yet those who continued patiently to seek solutions and did not give up before the enormity of the task were right. Today there is a general belief that a multilateral convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons has real chances of coming into being, even though the optimistic assessments made towards the end of 1987, holding that an agreement in the course of 1988 was not impossible, have to be revised.

Among the factors which give us hope that negotiations will culminate in agreement in the not too distant future, I wish to point out the following. Since the beginning of negotiations on a chemical weapon ban, everybody has been aware of the enormous difficulties involved in adequately verifying such an agreement. Now we have reached the stage of thorough examination and negotiation at a very technical level and agreement-oriented work partly in close co-operation with the civil chemical industries in our countries. It is a relatively new phenomenon that hopefully marks the beginning of the final run. At the same time we should not forget that a multilateral convention of similar significance, where effective monitoring posed enormous technical problems, was realized here in Geneva in 1972 - the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. The prospects of biological warfare are as frightening as the use of chemical substances, with their ability to destroy or cripple lives on a massive scale and at low cost. And the fact that biological substances, such as toxins, have effectively been banned, has encouraged those who for decades have tried to achieve a ban on chemical weapons.

(Mr. Ceska, Austria)

Though there is no need for me to tell this forum of the enormous political and technological difficulties which still have to be surmounted before a comprehensive ban can be achieved, may I nevertheless raise a few points? Politically, answers will have to be found for a number of basic questions. Will all countries which possess chemical weapons admit this fact? Will all countries with the capacity to produce chemical weapons renounce that capacity? Will all the countries which have chemical weapons be ready to destroy their stocks under adequate international verification and renounce future production or acquisition? In other words, will all the countries whose participation is essential for the success and effectiveness of such a ban be ready to accede to the convention banning chemical weapons? In this context we welcome the comprehensive information submitted by Ambassador Friedersdorf in his statement to the Conference on Disarmament on 28 July 1988 on the United States chemical weapon production facilities.

The technological difficulties are, of course, related to adequate verification. The planned concepts of verification, including challenge inspection, will hopefully prove adequate to ensure compliance with the convention. To meet this goal, we have, inter alia, to take into account the production of civil industries and the phenomenon of binary weapons. Although we are looking for the strictest monitoring possible, we have to admit that 100 per cent verification is not feasible. As a consequence challenge inspection should be conceived in such a way as to provide a sufficiently high risk for potential violators of the treaty to effectively deter them from doing so.

Of course, many problems remain to be solved. Inter alia, financial arrangements concerning the verification régime will have to be worked out. Given the scope of the task, the question of financing verification procedures will not be a negligible one, and fair solutions will have to be found.

An important prerequisite for a meaningful agreement is the readiness of the chemical industries in all countries to fully co-operate. In this context, my country attaches great importance to the chemical experts meeting we witnessed last week. An Austrian expert took part in its work. As in other countries, it was not not easy at the beginning to persuade the Austrian chemical industry to co-operate. The industry's major concerns relate to confidential information on production techniques and on clients, and should be taken duly into account. With the help of a process of information and explanation, chemical industry representatives have become prepared to make their own contribution to the future convention.

I take this opportunity to add that Austria has decided to establish, and is at present examining the legislative requirements for establishing, transfer and export controls on eight highly toxic chemical substances, five of which belong to the category of "key precursors", so that the necessary regulations can come into force as soon as possible. I further wish to confirm what the Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Mr. Mock, indicated at the Conference on Disarmament on 14 April 1988, namely, that on the basis of the "matrix version" submitted under CD/CW/WP.193, comprehensive country-wide research on data concerning production facilities and chemicals listed in schedules 2 and 3 of the annex to article VI of the convention is under way.

(Mr. Ceska, Austria)

After the horrifying experiences in Europe during the First World War, when poison gas was used on a large scale and caused death and invalidity to thousands of soldiers, chemical weapons have not been used on such a scale for nearly 60 years. The horror of this experience led to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. This Protocol, though incomplete, since it did not forbid the production or stockpiling of such substances and did not set out any verification procedures, was respected even during the most devastating moments of the Second World War.

Recently, however, chemical weapons have been massively used in the Gulf War. The world has become the horrified witness of those events with the help of modern mass media. Public opinion throughout the world has become more aware of the fact that the use of deadly chemical substances in armed conflicts is, towards the end of the twentieth century, not just a bad dream but a dreadful reality. The repeated use of chemical weapons in the Gulf War is indeed a fact, and I see a certain danger that mankind will get used to the idea of chemical arms being considered as standard weapons and chemical warfare becoming routine. It is therefore imperative to alert the international community in order to avoid a general state of mind which might finally tolerate the routine commission of such violations of international law. If, through a convention banning chemical weapons, we succeed in removing such weapons from the arsenals of all countries, we will not only do away with the threat of their use during a military conflict. It will also mean that such categories of weapons cannot be used as an instrument of political pressure outside a military confrontation.

Chemical warfare, for many years more an item in the history of warfare than a means of combat in actual use, has come back during the last few years as a cruel reality, victimizing both soldiers and the civilian population - old people, women, children, innocents, blind fate striking out against the unaware in a truly inhumane disruption of everyday life. In this regard, having read the two reports issued by the Security Council (S/20060 of 10 July 1988 and S/20063 of 25 July 1988), we cannot but be shocked by the now confirmed use of chemical weapons in the recent past in the Iran/Iraq conflict. We have had occasion in Austria to treat victims of this type of warfare. We have tried to find new means of medical care to treat and rehabilitate victims and develop new protective and first aid material. We consider that this is one specific way in which a permanently neutral country can contribute to stemming the tide of suffering brought about by chemical weapons. But this is not enough.

Austria feels deeply committed to full co-operation in the fight against chemical weapons being waged by the international community, and particularly the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, as the trustee of the international community as a whole. Austria does not possess or produce chemical weapons, and has no facilities to produce such weapons. The Austrian Government intends to take the necessary steps to be among the first group of States to sign the convention on the complete and general prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. We sincerely hope that, in spite of many questions still to be solved, such a convention will soon be finalized.

(Mr. Ceska, Austria)

At present we are facing favourable political parameters we have not witnessed for a very long time. East-West relations in general, and relations between the two major Powers in particular, reflect a will to come to mutually beneficial understandings. Regional conflicts which for many years have put a heavy strain on international relations seem to be on their way to solution. Developments in Afghanistan, in the Gulf War, around Kampuchea and Angola give rise to hope for a future of lessened international tension. These favourable conditions should make it possible to create the political will needed to ban the spectre of chemical warfare. Let this "window of opportunity" not pass by!

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and for the kind words which he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Nazarkin.

Mr. NAZARKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Permit me first of all, Sir, to express my satisfaction at the beginning of your presidency, and to wish you success in this post. It is also a pleasure for us to see beside you your predecessor in the post of representative of Indonesia to the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Tarmidzi.

The question of the interrelationship between multilateral and bilateral efforts in the field of disarmament negotiations has been raised frequently in the United Nations and in other international forums, particularly here at the Conference on Disarmament. As the discussion has shown, a general view has taken shape that the bilateral and multilateral processes should go in parallel, each supplementing and enriching the other. One of the means of ensuring this mutual enrichment, in our view, is the provision of information to the participants in multilateral forums concerning the course of the bilateral negotiations.

The practice of informing the participants in multilateral forums of progress in bilateral talks is already fairly well developed. Here I might mention the parallel presentation by the Soviet and American delegations to the Conference on Disarmament of the documents of the Washington summit, including the INF Treaty, the Soviet-American Agreement on the Establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centres together with its two protocols, a joint statement at the Moscow summit and the Agreement between the USSR and the United States on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles. By this means the Soviet Union and the United States were responding to a call by the United Nations General Assembly, which in resolution 42/38 A of 30 November 1987 invited the two Governments "to keep other States Members of the United Nations duly informed of progress in those negotiations".

We have also carefully studied the proposals made during the spring session of the Conference regarding the need for the Conference to be informed systematically of progress in the bilateral Soviet-American negotiations, and also regarding the problems and difficulties that arise. We agree with the view that the provision of such information can act as a stimulus to progress in the consideration of the problems on the agenda of the Conference. For instance, the Conference can gain experience which would be of value for work

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

on the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons from the verification provisions developed for the INF Treaty. In addition, the goals towards which we are working under items 2 and 5 of the agenda of the Conference are related to the topic of the bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space arms.

At the same time, we consider that the multilateral discussions can in turn stimulate the bilateral negotiations. Today the Soviet Union, pursuing its approach of principle concerning internationalization of disarmament efforts and the provision of information to the international community on progress in our bilateral talks with the United States on the complex of arms limitation and reduction issues, is taking a new step in that direction. Allow me to introduce to you the head of the Soviet delegation to the Soviet-American negotiations on nuclear and space arms, Ambassador A. Oboukhov, who will inform the Conference of progress at those negotiations. With your permission, Mr. President, I would now like to hand over to Ambassador A. Oboukhov.

Mr. OBOUKHOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): First of all I would like to express my appreciation at being given an opportunity to speak at a plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, and to inform its participants about the Soviet assessment of the state of affairs at the Soviet-United States negotiations on nuclear and space arms taking place in Geneva.

First, a few words about the history of the negotiations. As you know, in accordance with an agreement reached at foreign minister level between the USSR and the United States, the talks on nuclear and space arms started in the spring of 1985. From the very outset of the negotiations, at which each side is represented by a single delegation, three groups were set up, on space arms, strategic offensive arms and also intermediate-range nuclear systems. Nine rounds have been held. On 12 July this year work began at the tenth round of the negotiations. Those are the statistics.

Now what are the concrete results of the delegations' work over the last three and a half years? As of today, the most important result is the Treaty Between the USSR and the United States on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. The historic significance of that agreement, signed during the Soviet-United States summit in Washington last December, is that for the first time it eliminates an entire class of Soviet and American nuclear arms and sets new standards for arms control. In all approximately 2,500 missiles are to be eliminated. The parties have undertaken not to produce in the future land-based ballistic or cruise missiles with a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometres and not to flight-test them. Thus a practical start has been made on building a world without nuclear arms. The INF Treaty has entered into force - a protocol on the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the Treaty was signed at the Soviet-American summit in Moscow in May/June this year. Since then a number of activities related to the inspection functions provided for in the Treaty have been carried out. The strictly monitored process of elimination of intermediate-range and short-range missiles has begun. The INF Treaty is a concrete expression of new thinking in politics, now that mankind is facing in all its magnitude the problem of ensuring its survival and preventing a nuclear catastrophe.

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

It should be stressed that the programme of nuclear disarmament proposed by M.S. Gorbachev on 15 January 1986 has been of fundamental importance in developing the Soviet approach to negotiations on nuclear and space arms in general and the issue of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in particular. That programme, building on the realities of the current international situation and the practical possibilities arising from it, sets out conceptual and at the same time concrete aspects of the struggle to achieve a nuclear-free world by the year 2000. Thereby Soviet diplomacy has been provided with clear guidelines for active efforts aimed at reaching that goal.

The Soviet-American summits in Geneva in October 1985 and in Reykjavik in November 1986 were of paramount importance in moving the two sides towards the INF Treaty. Thus the mutual understanding reached at the Geneva summit to the effect that the USSR and the United States will continue to be guided by the conviction that a nuclear war must never be fought and cannot be won has been of great importance for constructive progress at the negotiations. At that time the two sides stated that they were firmly resolved to prevent any war, nuclear or conventional, between the USSR and the United States and that neither would seek military superiority over the other. That declaration made at Geneva was reaffirmed by the two sides at the meeting between M.S. Gorbachev and R. Reagan in Washington.

There is every reason to say that the INF Treaty embodies that declaration in the specific area it covers. When difficulties which seemed insurmountable arose at the negotiations, the creative search continued for the most appropriate solutions. The initiatives put forward in that connection during 1987 by M.S. Gorbachev offer striking examples of a wise balance, flexibility, an ability to take all factors into account in the search for solutions that serve the interests of the USSR and the United States, their allies, as well as other countries. It is also necessary to emphasize the role played by Soviet-American meetings at the foreign minister level in the elaboration of the INF Treaty. Five such meetings were held between April and November 1987, that is, during the period of the most active and substantive work on the Treaty. Soviet Foreign Minister E.A. Shevardnadze and United States Secretary of State G. Shultz resolved many issues of fundamental importance which were blocking the way towards agreement. As a result - with active support from public opinion and many States - a document was drawn up which embodies a balance between the two sides' interests and reliably serves to strengthen universal security.

The Soviet Union, faithful to the ideals of nuclear disarmament, views the INF Treaty as a first practical step along this difficult but perfectly feasible path. All the more reason to be disturbed by the current talk in some NATO circles of measures to "compensate" for the American missiles being eliminated in Western Europe. Clearly this would run counter to the growing trend towards the reduction of nuclear arms and the lessening of the nuclear danger.

The INF Treaty must not remain an isolated event in the struggle to eliminate nuclear arms. The conclusion of the INF Treaty signifies that the entire international community has gained invaluable practical experience

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

enabling it to proceed further without losing momentum. In the process of disarmament delay is unacceptable. The Soviet side would like to see progress in all areas of disarmament without any pre-conditions or linkages.

The INF Treaty is innovative both for its objective - the complete elimination of an entire class of Soviet and United States nuclear arms - and for the novelty and scope of its verification provisions. The system of measures to verify compliance with the obligations assumed by the two sides under the Treaty is truly unprecedented both in scope and in depth. We consider that, since what is involved here is the elimination of an entire class of Soviet and United States nuclear missiles, issues of verification are of particular importance too. In these circumstances certainty that the Treaty will be strictly observed becomes not only a question of confidence-building but also a question of meeting legitimate security interests. For this very reason the Soviet side advocated from the outset that agreement should be sought on an effective and stringent verification system within the framework of the INF Treaty, based on the use of national technical means of verification in conjunction with on-site inspections.

I would like briefly to address the basic parameters of the verification system established under the INF Treaty. The provision of baseline data by the parties, within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding which is an integral part of the Treaty, facilitates the implementation of verification procedures. These data include both numerical indicators and certain qualitative characteristics of arms to be eliminated. The level of detail and the volume of data are unprecedented. In order to ensure strict verification and achievement of the agreed goals, the parties agreed to put documentation on the negotiating table including photographs of arms and site diagrams of missile operating bases and missile support facilities, among them production facilities, which used to be kept in secret safes, sealed as we say, with seven seals. This is a striking manifestation of glasnost in the new phase of the struggle for nuclear disarmament which has been initiated by the INF Treaty.

One of the Treaty's distinguishing features is that it provides not only for the complete elimination of all deployed and non-deployed intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, but also for cessation of their production. At the same time, proper verification of compliance with this obligation is provided for. In particular, it has been agreed that continuous monitoring of production will be instituted at the exits from a plant in Votkinsk in the USSR and an American plant in Magna, Utah. This will provide an assurance that the Soviet side has stopped production of "SS-20" missiles and that "Pershing-2" missiles are no longer produced in the United States. Periodic inspections will help in verifying the non-production of launchers of land-based ballistic and cruise missiles of the relevant range. A list of facilities subject to such inspections is contained in the Memorandum of Understanding. On-site inspections are provided for both on the territory of the USSR and the United States and on the territories of countries where missiles to be eliminated are deployed: the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia on the one hand, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands on the other. Inspections within an established quota may be conducted throughout the entire period of elimination of missiles and during the subsequent 10 years. The USSR and the United States

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

have the right to conduct 20 such inspections per year during the first three years after the entry into force of the Treaty, 15 in the next five years and 10 in the five years after that.

In addition to continuous monitoring at the exits from manufacturing plants and inspections within established quotas to verify that ballistic and cruise missile launchers are not being produced, the following inspections are provided for: baseline inspections, inspections to confirm that missile operating bases and missile support facilities (with the exception of missile production facilities) have been eliminated, and inspections of the elimination process with respect to intermediate-range and short-range missiles. Also provided for are inspections of former missile operating bases and former missile support facilities eliminated under the Treaty, with the exception of former missile production facilities.

Agreement was reached on the common obligations of the parties relating to the procedure for providing notifications of an intention to conduct an inspection, the obligations of the inspected and the inspecting parties with regard to such notifications, procedures for arrival and accommodation of inspectors and transport to the inspection site, including procedures for the use of measuring equipment, general rules for conducting inspections, privileges and immunities of inspectors and air crew members, etc. The procedure for conducting inspections on the territories of basing countries is governed by agreements with them which are based on the relevant provisions of the INF Treaty.

Of particular value was the Soviet-American agreement on nuclear risk reduction centres which was signed in Washington in September 1987 at the foreign minister level. The facsimile communication line between these centres is used to transmit notifications and other relevant information in connection with the INF Treaty. The parties have agreed to establish a Special Verification Commission to consider and resolve questions relating to compliance with the Treaty. All this provides a reliable system to verify that the obligations assumed are strictly and unswervingly complied with. The verification system provided for in the INF Treaty is already demonstrating its potentialities. Thus, in the process of preparing the Treaty for ratification, the two sides, using the Treaty provisions as a basis, managed to find mutually acceptable solutions to a number of issues connected with the implementation of verification measures. This testifies to the fact that, when there is good will on both sides and a common desire to build up confidence and remove concern, it is possible to resolve the most complex problems of verification in a satisfactory manner. This was clearly demonstrated by the experience gained in the conclusion of the INF Treaty and the first steps in its implementation. I consider that this experience should not be limited to this Treaty alone. It can and must be used - taking into account the specific characteristics of each issue, of course - in working out other bilateral or multilateral agreements in the area of arms control and disarmament.

It must be said that the USSR and the United States have decided to use this experience in a creative way in the process of reaching agreement on verification provisions in the draft treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons. As a result a number of provisions of vital

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

importance in this area have already been agreed. We think that the spirit of innovation inherent in the verification mechanism which was created under the INF Treaty, as well as some of the specific approaches and solutions contained in it, can be successfully used in tackling problems arising in the complete destruction of chemical weapons and cessation of production and preparing a draft convention on the subject.

The conclusion of the INF Treaty has dramatically demonstrated that verification, no matter how complex some of its aspects may be, need not be an obstacle to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. Disarmament is a global problem, and it must be approached in such a way that the gains achieved in one area serve as an incentive and a nutrient for a good harvest to be reaped in other areas.

After the INF Treaty had been concluded, the negotiations on nuclear and space arms were somewhat reorganized. Of the original three groups in the negotiations, two now remain, one on strategic offensive arms and the other on space arms. At present, therefore, work at these negotiations is focusing on the two principal goals - the preparation of a draft treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive arms, and a separate agreement on issues relating to the ABM Treaty.

Negotiations on nuclear and space arms are part of the process of positive changes now under way in the world. The foremost result of these changes is that the risk of nuclear war has been diminished. Following the major agreements that have been reached, the emphasis in international affairs is shifting from confrontation to co-operation, mutual understanding, negotiations with the prospect of concrete results, primarily in the area of weapons of mass destruction. Soviet-American relations have improved. The pan-European process has become more vigorous, both at the international level and particularly in terms of public participation. The Geneva agreements have been concluded, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan has begun.

It is the wish of the Soviet side that the negotiations on nuclear and space arms, and the agreements that may be reached there, should serve as a solid contribution towards further normalization of the international situation. This is all the more necessary since the situation in the world is still complex and contradictory. No radical change for the better has yet taken place. The danger that human civilization, life itself will be annihilated, still remains. Hence the need for new vigorous efforts aimed at reducing military expenditure, diminishing and ultimately eliminating the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war. The USSR and its allies are united in their desire to achieve these goals. This is demonstrated by the results of the recent meeting in Warsaw of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty. Analysing the situation in Europe and the world at large, as well as the burning issues of today - the prevention of war, the halting of the arms race and a decisive turn towards disarmament - the meeting of the Committee outlined priorities in this field. Amongst them is the conclusion of a treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive arms, subject to compliance with the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972 and non-withdrawal from it for an agreed period.

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

What, in concrete terms, is the situation now at the negotiations? As you know, major decisions on the entire range of nuclear and space arms issues were taken as early as December 1987 at the Washington summit. Agreement was reached on a number of conceptual problems relating to the negotiations, and both delegations were instructed to work vigorously towards the completion of a joint draft of the future treaty. Moreover, a formula was found concerning compliance with and non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Since the Washington summit both sides have done a great deal towards reaching an agreement on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons. In that process a special role has again been played by the Soviet-American meetings held regularly - virtually every month - at the foreign minister level, where the most important problems in the current negotiations are discussed. As a result, the joint drafts of four documents have been prepared: the draft treaty itself on 50 per cent reductions in offensive arms, as well as drafts of a memorandum of understanding, a protocol on inspections and a protocol on conversion or elimination.

The joint draft treaty reflects the earlier understanding on establishing ceilings of no more than 1,600 strategic delivery systems and 6,000 warheads, as well as agreement on subceilings of 4,900 in the aggregate of ICBM and SLBM warheads and 1,540 warheads on 154 heavy missiles. The draft treaty also records agreement between the parties that, as a result of the reductions, the aggregate throw weight of the Soviet Union's ICBMs and SLBMs will be brought down to approximately 50 per cent of the existing level, and that this level will not be exceeded. Understanding has also been reached that in future work on the treaty the parties will act on the understanding that on deployed ICBMs and SLBMs of existing types the counting rule will include the number of warheads referred to in the joint statement of 10 December 1987, and the number of warheads that will be attributed to each new type of ballistic missile, which is subject to negotiation. Agreement has also been reached on a rule that heavy bombers equipped only for nuclear gravity bombs and short-range missiles will count as one delivery vehicle against the 1,600 limit and one warhead against the 6,000 limit. Of course, this counting rule, which was agreed back in Reykjavik, will apply if the 600-kilometre threshold, also agreed before, is used to divide air-to-surface missiles into long-range and shorter-range missiles.

The drafts of the protocol on inspections, the protocol on conversion or elimination and the memorandum of understanding, which are integral parts of the treaty, build on the verification provisions of the INF Treaty, extending and refining them as necessary to meet the more demanding requirements of the treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive arms. The verification measures will include as a minimum the exchange and updating of data, baseline inspections, on-site observation of elimination of relevant systems, continuous on-site monitoring of the perimeter and portals of critical production facilities to confirm the output of weapons to be limited, etc.

Unfortunately it must be noted that we failed to reach complete agreement on the draft texts of the above documents by the time of the Moscow summit. The difficulties that arose here were largely objective in nature. They are caused by the highly complicated nature of the problems under discussion - what is involved, after all, is radical reductions in armaments of various kinds and types. It is necessary to find agreed approaches to every one of

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

them, both in terms of methods of effectively limiting them and in terms of reliable verification of compliance with the obligations to be assumed. And this is not an easy task.

The Soviet-American summit in Moscow gave new, important impetus to the work of the delegations at the Geneva talks. Thus the discussions in Moscow led to a substantial broadening of common ground on such important matters as verification of mobile ICBM launchers, and also limitations on long-range ALCMs and heavy bombers. The additional common ground has been recorded in documents exchanged by the two sides. The delegations are to place these understandings on record in the joint draft text of the treaty on strategic offensive weapons. But of course, it is necessary to go further and seek to resolve the above issues completely.

It is also of great significance for the positive development of the negotiations that the joint statement adopted at the end of the Moscow meeting reaffirmed the language on ABM Treaty issues agreed at the Washington summit in December 1987. The Soviet and United States leaders directed their representatives at the negotiations to prepare a joint draft of a separate agreement and continue work on its associated protocol. As a result of the Moscow meeting the parties expressed their shared conviction that the extensive work done provides the basis for concluding a treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms which will promote strategic stability and strengthen security not only for the Soviet and American peoples, but for the whole of mankind. The parties have agreed to continue their efforts in this area energetically and purposefully. They have also reached an understanding in principle that, once the remaining problems have been solved and the treaty and its associated documents agreed, they will be signed without delay. Thus the Moscow summit gives both negotiating teams a joint mandate, drawing on the progress already achieved, to seek the early preparation of the treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons in strict compliance with the ABM Treaty.

It is with these intentions that the Soviet delegation came back to Geneva for the current round of negotiations. Following instructions from its leadership, the Soviet delegation has taken the course of accelerating the negotiation process from the very beginning of the round. For the past three weeks we have been introducing an entire range of proposals to ensure further progress. They include the Soviet draft protocol regarding the aggregate throw weight of ICBMs and SLBMs, tabled as early as the first plenary meeting of this round. This Soviet move, which takes into account the considerations put forward by the United States delegation, allows us to resolve the issue of throw weight on a mutually acceptable compromise basis. The Soviet side has put forward constructive proposals concerning the section of the future treaty on conversion or elimination to be implemented for the purpose of achieving and maintaining radically reduced aggregate limits established for relevant systems under the treaty. The Soviet approach makes it possible to reach complete agreement on this section of the future treaty. The USSR delegation has also pursued a dynamic course with respect to the materialization of new areas of agreement on issues relating to verification of mobile ICBM launchers, and also restrictions on long-range ALCMs and heavy bombers. We have tabled a series of formulations to this effect for inclusion in the documents being elaborated. We look forward to a constructive response from the American side to this and other Soviet proposals.

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

It should be noted that the very first weeks of the current negotiating round have already seen a degree of progress in some areas. But we have to be self-critical - this progress is very modest. We are convinced that it could have been much more significant. There is a great amount of work that has yet to be done to resolve outstanding issues. For this work to be accomplished, good will and readiness to search for solutions, backed up by specific and constructive steps at the negotiations, are needed on both sides.

It should be noted that progress at the negotiations is largely dependent on the resolution of such issues as compliance with and non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and also limitations on the deployment of long-range sea-launched cruise missiles.

Why is it these questions that have now come to the fore in the negotiations? Let us take outer space issues. The point is that there is a deep and organic interrelationship between radical reductions in strategic offensive arms and the reaching of an agreement which would confirm the obligations of the USSR and the United States as regards compliance with the ABM Treaty for the next 9 or 10 years. Indeed, an extension of the arms race to outer space would be fraught with the danger of a very serious destabilization of the world situation in its entirety. M.S. Gorbachev stresses: "Normal logic cannot grasp the idea of curbing strategic offensive arms on Earth while building a bridge to extend the arms race into outer space". Clearly these two processes would be incompatible.

What in concrete terms is the Soviet approach to the issues related to the ABM Treaty? We would like the agreement reached in Washington on 10 December 1987 to be reflected precisely and fully in appropriate legal language in the provisions of a separate agreement to this effect. To put it differently, the agreement being elaborated should incorporate the obligation to comply with the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972, not to withdraw from the Treaty for an agreed period, and to hold intensive discussions on strategic stability not later than three years before the end of the period of non-withdrawal.

The conclusion of an agreement on compliance with and non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for an agreed period is a necessary prerequisite for radical reductions in strategic offensive arms. Without it such reductions would be impossible. In this connection we believe that the obligation not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty must be clear and unambiguous. It must be an absolute obligation. Only then would it play a stabilizing role in the context of deep cuts in strategic offensive weapons. This approach flows directly from the essence of the Washington agreement. This agreement also clearly stipulates that the ABM Treaty must be complied with as signed in 1972. Thus, the language agreed in Washington reaffirms the limitations imposed on the parties by the ABM Treaty, and cannot be considered as permitting the so-called "broad" interpretation of the ABM Treaty. It would also run counter to the spirit and letter of the Washington agreement if the right of the parties to deploy a large-scale ABM system, including a space-based system, immediately after the period of non-withdrawal, was laid down now. Such an approach would be tantamount to an attempt to predetermine the outcome of future negotiations on strategic stability. Thus we favour reaching agreement on compliance with

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

and non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for an agreed period, and not on a joint shift to deployment of the ABM systems which are prohibited under the ABM Treaty.

In the course of the previous negotiating round the parties succeeded in preparing a joint draft of a protocol to the ABM Treaty. However, the many brackets that remain in the draft require further serious work to remove differences in the parties' approaches. The Soviet side proceeds from the view that the verification, confidence-building and predictability measures reflected in the protocol should also be aimed at providing the parties with a firm assurance that the ABM Treaty will be strictly complied with. To this end we propose that the following measures should be carried out. First, an exchange of data on ABM-related work, meetings of experts, reciprocal visits to test ranges where work in this area is carried out. Second, exchange of information to prevent uncertainty as regards compliance with the obligations assumed by the parties. Third, verification of compliance with the obligations assumed, by means of measures including inspections of facilities with respect to which the parties feel concern. Fourth, consultations to examine situations which one of the parties considers as jeopardizing its supreme interests. During the consultations the parties would use all available means to resolve the situations on a mutually acceptable basis. Thus these Soviet proposals too serve as a good basis for agreement.

The Soviet delegation at the talks is resolved to do everything necessary to carry out the instructions given by the leaders of the USSR and the United States as a result of their meeting in Moscow, i.e. to prepare the joint draft of a separate agreement which would clearly and fully reflect the Washington formula on ABM Treaty issues, and to finalize the protocol to the Treaty.

The limitation of long-range SLCMs poses another problem of utmost importance for the future treaty on strategic offensive arms. This new and dangerous kind of strategic offensive weapon must be limited in a way that can be relied on. This is indispensable to ensure the effectiveness and permanence of the future treaty, to guarantee that it will not be circumvented. As we understand it, both sides recognize the importance of this matter. This can be seen from the mutual obligation assumed under the Washington joint statement to establish ceilings on long-range SLCMs with effective verification. In the course of the negotiations the Soviet side, in keeping with that obligation, has put forward and substantiated a comprehensive programme of far-reaching measures in this area, including a proposal for specific numerical limits on the deployment of long-range SLCMs. I would like to address the issues of verification in more detail because, as our negotiating partners have noted, it is these questions that pose the greatest difficulty.

The Soviet side has proposed that the entire life cycle, as it were, of long-range SLCMs should be subject to strict verification. Verification would start with the establishment of continuous perimeter and portal monitoring at the production facilities for such missiles. In this way each SLCM produced would immediately be counted. Continuous verification would also be established at designated arming stations where SLCMs are equipped with nuclear warheads, following which they are loaded on submarines and surface

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

ships of the agreed types. We propose that the number of such arming stations should be limited, and that the loading of SLCMs on submarines and surface vessels elsewhere, including in the open sea, should be prohibited. If at the time of the entry into force of the treaty on strategic offensive arms either party has submarines or surface ships already equipped with long-range SLCMs, that party will have to display each such missile for counting purposes. The Soviet side also favours the extensive use of national technical means of verification. The American side has received a proposal for a joint experiment involving the use of remote verification equipment to determine the presence of nuclear weapons on board ships.

Should concern arise in the process of verification using such means, inspections could be conducted directly on board a submarine or surface vessel which was undergoing such verification. This would remove any possible misunderstandings. Much importance is attached to inspections in general in the Soviet approach to the issues of verification of long-range SLCMs. For instance, we propose that short-notice inspections should be conducted at locations where either side considers covert deployment of long-range SLCMs is occurring. This means that any warship on either side would if necessary be subject to inspection on a reciprocal basis. I believe that such a radical verification measure speaks for itself. Obviously all the provisions of the treaty under which the limitations laid down may be verified would be applied to SLCMs and other kinds of strategic offensive arms. These include the exchange of relevant data, the provision of notifications and the conduct of inspections to check the accuracy of the baseline data that the sides would exchange upon the entry into force of the treaty, as well as verification of elimination procedures, etc. The reliability of the verification would also be assured by the Soviet proposal to limit the number of types of surface vessels and submarines on which long-range SLCMs may be located. Taken together, all these forms and methods of verification would offer the parties an assurance that the obligations assumed were being strictly adhered to. In short, the problem of limiting the numbers of long-range SLCMs with proper verification can and must be resolved. Failing this, the treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive arms would be ineffective.

In the course of the negotiations we will be trying to persuade the United States to accept the effective and far-reaching methods for verifying long-range SLCMs that we have proposed. Once again I would like to stress that the Soviet side attaches particular importance to questions of the strict verification of compliance with the limitations to be established. This approach of principle was reaffirmed by M.S. Gorbachev in his report to the recent nineteenth All-Union Party Conference. The Soviet delegation intends, as in the past, to pursue this approach consistently in the practical work at the negotiations. We are convinced that effective verification measures should apply equally to all strategic offensive weapons covered by the future treaty, including ICBMs, SLBMs, heavy bombers and long-range ALCMs and SLCMs. Any discrimination, any selective approach is inadmissible here. We are looking forward to constructive co-operation with the American side in devising a reliable verification system suited to the goals and purposes of the future treaty.

(Mr. Oboukhov, USSR)

Substantial progress has already been made towards a treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons. In accordance with the instructions given to the delegations by the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States at their meeting in Moscow, the Soviet side is ready to work actively and productively in both groups, on space arms and on strategic offensive arms. We do not wish to lose momentum, but to pursue the speedy finalization of the joint drafts of the documents in question, in co-operation with the United States representatives at the negotiations. The future treaty can only be the fruit of joint efforts on both sides. All countries, all peoples, cherish the hope that the Soviet-American treaty on 50 per cent reductions in strategic offensive weapons in the context of compliance with the ABM Treaty will soon become a reality. The interests of overall security and prevention of the threat of war demand it.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to thank the leader of the Soviet delegation to the bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space arms, Ambassador Oboukhov, for the information that he has just conveyed to us. I should also like to express my appreciation to him for having come to the Conference to present the views of his Government on matters of vital importance for this single multilateral negotiating forum. In addition I would like to thank Ambassador Nazarkin for his introductory statement. I now give the floor to the next speaker on my list, the representative of Canada, Ambassador Marchand.

Mr. MARCHAND (Canada): Mr. President, may I begin by officially extending my warmest welcome to you and congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency for this month? As a relatively new arrival myself, I can well appreciate the position in which you must find yourself in assuming this important responsibility so soon after your arrival in Geneva; and I pledge the full co-operation of my delegation and myself in assisting you in your work. I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation of the outstanding work of your immediate predecessor, Ambassador Teja, and his delegation, during his presidency for the month of July. Further, on both my behalf and that of my delegation, I offer a warm welcome to the other new representatives to the Conference, and I extend to Ambassador Tarmidzi and other departing colleagues our best wishes for continued success.

Last week I offered some observations on the results of SSOD-III and the implications Canada saw for our future work on outer space. This week, I should like to comment briefly on our current negotiations on a convention banning chemical weapons, and specifically on the issues we are addressing during this summer session. In focusing on some of the issues that raise particular concerns for Canada, my observations will by no means be exhaustive or categorical.

There is a gratifying degree of consensus, noticeable at SSOD-III, on the importance and urgency of realizing the proposed convention on CW. We should build upon this during the remainder of the 1988 session. Already, even though we are only some four weeks into the summer session, we are pleased to note the serious, business-like approach that negotiators are taking in their examination of the outstanding issues. As I said last spring, my Government favours such a measured pace, without artificial deadlines. But the Canadian Government also recognizes that there are compelling reasons for pressing ahead as hard as we can in our negotiations. Not only is our goal more

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

clearly in sight, but the recent repeated use of chemical weapons raises the increasing danger of chemical weapons appearing to be effective as weapons of war. My Government therefore shares the sense of urgency to suppress or choke off their temptation. My Government is convinced that this is one genie that we can and must put back into the bottle - and quickly.

In offering some observations on the issues currently being discussed in the Ad hoc Committee and its working groups, I should emphasize again that, overall, we are pleased with the workmanlike, unpolemical approach delegations are pursuing. We see several encouraging developments. We also see some that perhaps are not so encouraging. We welcome the promising signs of progress on substantial, even critical, issues in articles VIII and IX and in the final articles. We are hopeful for similar signs in our discussions on articles X and XI, although I am obliged to note that some proposals put forward this week on article X seem to be regressive rather than progressive, in terms of the consensus that appeared to be emerging during our spring discussions.

We are rather more concerned about the article VI discussions, however, where the exchange of views seems rather circular. I refer specially to the recently concluded examination of schedule [1] and schedule [4], where there are few signs of real progress since last January's discussions. We ought to remind ourselves that the issues being discussed under these sections constitute one of the most critical areas remaining to be confronted. We believe a number of our problems here may be traced back to our lack of clearly understood definitions, especially what constitutes a chemical weapon. If this situation continues, and if our discussions in Working Group B do not significantly advance our common understanding of the definitions, perhaps we should consider earmarking article II as the priority issue for more detailed discussions during next winter's inter-sessionals.

Concerning Group B's discussions on article V, I had hoped to comment favourably on its progress in reviewing the proposals of the United States and USSR on chemical weapons production facilities. Like many other delegations, however, my delegation was concerned to learn last week that Mr. Macedo's efforts to introduce elements of these proposals into the text of article V have run into difficulties. We strongly support Mr. Macedo's call for the early resolution of these - hopefully minor - problems, so that we can proceed with the appropriate amendment of the text of article V.

Concerning the rest of Group B's current agenda, I should like to address a specific comment to article IV and the general question of the order of destruction. In developing an agreed régime for the phased destruction of chemical weapons, my Government agrees that one of the primary concerns is to ensure that this process does not cause any diminution of the national security of any State party during the very sensitive 10-year destruction phase. I must again state, however, that my Government cannot support proposals intended to address these legitimate concerns about security that have the net effect of permitting the production and proliferation of chemical weapons during this crucial phase. Given the central purpose of the convention - the complete elimination of chemical weapons for all time - it seems fundamentally illogical to have the convention sanction any production of CW after it has come into effect.

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

Turning to article VIII, we are impressed with the solid progress achieved by Working Group C under Mr. Numata's able chairmanship. We look forward to that Group realizing substantial further progress on the remaining substantive political issues, particularly on the question of the composition, procedure and decision-making of the Executive Council. I should like to note here that my Government is continuing to focus a major part of its own research efforts in the area of the international inspectorate - and the somewhat related area of the national authority (article VII) - and hopes to submit the results of our research for the Committee's consideration early in next year's session. (In this respect, I might also note for the record that we are distributing the latest addenda to our compendium of chemical weapons documentation.)

Similarly, we have been gratified to note the productive discussions in Group C on challenge inspections (article IX). Like others, we endorse Mr. Numata's view that the differences may be more apparent than real, and we think the open-ended discussions Mr. Numata has been conducting demonstrate the validity of this view. We recognize that a primary purpose of challenge inspection is to resolve the concerns of the requesting State. But we also endorse the argument that such events are of equal concern for the convention as a whole and, thus, for all States party. Our thinking, in this regard, reflects Canada's long-standing belief in and commitment to genuine multilateralism, and our firm view that the convention being negotiated here, if it is to retain its authority and legitimacy for all States party, must be an effective multilateral treaty.

Our delegation has been following with great interest the discussions on the final articles of the convention, and we very much appreciate Ambassador Sujka's skilful tacking through the shoals of these relatively uncharted waters. My Government has considered carefully arguments recently put forward in the exchange of views on article XII concerning the convention's relationship to the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We were particularly struck by the arguments of Ambassador von Stülpnagel and the Belgian representative. On reflection, my authorities are of the view that, from a strict, legal point of view, article XII may not in fact be necessary. In the light of the clear prohibitions found in article I (especially paragraphs 1 and 3), and of the provisions of article 59 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, it may be that article XII is redundant and could be eliminated.

More generally, I should like to comment on another legal issue that is relevant to a number of provisions in the convention - the question of the use of the terms "jurisdiction and control". Canada has particular difficulties with one aspect of these commonly used, but not commonly understood, terms: and that concerns the question of the responsibilities of States party for the activities outside their territory of foreign-incorporated subsidiaries of private corporations incorporated under their own laws.

For reasons that I will not detail here, it has been a long-standing policy of Canadian Governments not to accept that one State can exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction over enterprises incorporated under the laws of another State, even if they are subsidiaries owned or controlled by its nationals. It is our Government's firm view that the State under whose laws

(Mr. Marchand, Canada)

the subsidiary is incorporated has exclusive jurisdiction for activities of this separate legal entity within its own territory. This fundamental policy underlies our Government's approach to a wide range of issues arising in the international arena. While we can well understand the concerns of those who advocate extraterritorial extension of jurisdiction under the chemical weapons convention, I must put on record that my Government has not yet heard any compelling arguments that would cause it to alter its fundamental policy on this matter to achieve the purposes of this convention. Moreover, we believe that the purposes of this convention can be achieved without resort to provisions encompassing extraterritorial reach. We are not convinced of the need for any references to jurisdictional issues in the convention.

Ambassador Friedersdorf, in a recent intervention, discussed two other issues, on which I should like to comment briefly. The first concerns the Soviet proposal for a multilateral trial exercise to develop and test procedures for inspections of chemical industry facilities. One major consideration for Canada is that preliminary surveys of our industry indicate that, depending upon the thresholds eventually to be agreed, Canada may not possess commercial facilities that would be subject to routine inspection under the convention. Notwithstanding this possibility, however, we consider that the Soviet proposal merits our support in principle and our close consideration. The results of any such multilateral exercise, providing that it can be properly structured and organized, would be extremely relevant for our further work on article VIII and the organization of the international inspectorate.

The second issue concerns the protection of confidential commercial information. This issue figured large in our consultations with industrial representatives two weeks ago, and is a subject of particular concern to our delegation as well as several others around this table. Clearly, for us negotiators, the primary consideration is to ensure that the information necessary for the effective implementation of the convention is provided by industry. But we must also be prepared to take due account of industry's legitimate concern that commercially sensitive data is adequately protected. Ambassador Friedersdorf emphasized inter alia the need for industry to specify what types of information are truly confidential. I agree that this is an essential requirement. But I would also argue that a priority focus for us here is to examine more closely actual ways in which such information can be protected, perhaps - as others have suggested - by drawing upon precedents available from other international organizations and from our own national procedures. My authorities have been considering approaches to this issue of protecting confidentiality and hope to present our further views in future discussions.

I think it is evident from the number of issues I have raised that our negotiations are addressing substantial concerns in a serious manner. I find this encouraging, and I believe that, if we can maintain the momentum and continue to search for practical solutions to our problems, the 1988 session may well prove to be one of our most productive yet.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, may I also thank Ambassador Marchand for his kind words to Ambassador Tarmidzi? I now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Taylhardat.

Mr. TAYLHARDAT (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Thank you, Mr. President. Before starting my statement I would like to say how pleased we are to see you presiding over our work during this month of August. We would like to offer you our full co-operation and wish you every success in carrying out your very delicate task. I should also like to stress our gratitude to your predecessor in the Chair, Ambassador Teja of India, for his very wise and intelligent guiding of the work of the Conference during July.

During this summer session a number of colleagues have left their posts as representatives of their countries at the Conference. We will miss all of them and would like to wish them personal happiness as well as success in their future tasks. Also during this summer session we have been joined in the Conference by new representatives, including yourself, Sir, and also Ambassador Kostov of Bulgaria, Ambassador Ruoro of Kenya and Ambassador de Rivero of Peru. We would like to extend our most cordial welcome to all of them and offer them our co-operation.

Like other speakers who have taken the floor during this summer session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to devote the first part of my statement to making my own comments on the recently concluded special session of the United Nations devoted to disarmament. When the time for the beginning of the Assembly approached, a question was in the air around the conference: what is a successful special session? The most often heard and least optimistic reply was that a successful third special session would be one where the Final Document of 1978 was strengthened and where that instrument would be built on by the consolidation of its aims and revitalization of the international community's efforts for disarmament.

Man's endeavours are measured by their results. The same can be said of the endeavours of governments and States. This leads us to say that the third special session was a failure because it produced no concrete results. We must be honest with ourselves and recognize reality, and call a spade a spade. There is no purpose in trying to conceal the failure by bringing out aspects that, while important, do not hide the truth. It has been said that one result of the third special session was the participation of a considerable number of heads of State and foreign ministers and other eminent figures. The same is said in connection with the presence of large numbers of non-governmental organizations during the Assembly. Although we recognize the importance of these facts, none of them constitutes an achievement in itself. The successful effort to mobilize international public opinion in connection with the third special session, which culminated in this large-scale participation by non-governmental organizations and figures, did not produce the effect that was sought, which was to create conditions that would contribute to the success of the meeting and the reaching of the result sought. It has also been said that the third special session made it possible to exchange opinions and points of view, and served as a forum for the discussion of important issues relating to disarmament. Here once again we

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

think that the terms of the equation are being reversed. This exchange of ideas and opinions and these discussions, which we too think were extremely useful, do not constitute an achievement, but should be the means for achieving the result sought.

It must be recognized, however, that the statements heard in the plenary of the Assembly lead us to believe that today there is deeper and more widespread concern over the arms race. It would seem that the cause of disarmament has been steadily gaining supporters, even in the militarily important developed countries.

It has also been said that third special session made possible a broad convergence of views on many important issues, and that consensus was about to be reached. It was also said that in New York near-consensus was reached on the majority of issues considered. In our view the concept of consensus is an absolute one. Either there is consensus or there isn't. One cannot speak of semi-consensus. We have said this on other occasions; it is particularly valid in the field of disarmament, where a decision or measure that does not enjoy consensus has little or no value.

From the wreckage of the third special session it is just possible to extract two specific results that need to be preserved at all costs. First, the Final Document of the first special session remained intact, and the validity of this document as the basic tool available to us to guide international action for disarmament has not only not been diminished, but has been consolidated. Second, the confidence of the international community in the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament has been strengthened. Thus we, its member States, now have on our shoulders an even graver responsibility to contribute to ensuring that the work of the Conference measures up to the expectations of the international community.

We share the view of those who hold that there is no point in trying to attribute blame for the failure of the third special session. We also believe that instead of lamenting this mishap we should draw lessons from it that will enable us to continue our effort in favour of disarmament with renewed vigour. But this does not prevent us from making an effort to explain to ourselves what happened in New York and trying to identify the cause of the failure.

In our view the reason for the failure of the third special session is that there are two different concepts, two diametrically opposed approaches to the role that should be played by multilateral efforts in the disarmament field. The first, which we could call universalist, holds that disarmament is an issue of general interest in which the organized international community is called upon to play a decisive role through the adoption, by the multilateral bodies that it has itself established, of specific and effective measures intended to halt and reverse the arms race. The starting-point for this approach is recognition of the central role that should be played by the United Nations, without diminishing the importance of other forums of a more restricted nature or ignoring the essential role played by bilateral negotiations between the two super-Powers. This approach is faithfully reflected in paragraph 5 of the Final Document of SSOD-I, which says:

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

"The Members of the United Nations are fully aware of the conviction of their peoples that the question of general and complete disarmament is of utmost importance and that peace, security and economic and social development are indivisible, and they have therefore recognized that the corresponding obligations and responsibilities are universal."

The other approach, which could be called marginalist, although it also recognizes that the question of disarmament is a matter of general interest, perhaps with the sole exception of chemical weapons, does not accept that the United Nations should play a decisive role in efforts to halt the arms race. The supporters of this approach view the work of the United Nations or its competent bodies as a marginal activity that should be limited to carrying out a task that is more academic in nature, consisting of the consideration of general issues and the identification of abstract issues, with concrete action going no further than the adoption and implementation of ancillary measures, as I think they are called in English, which are intended to deal with marginal aspects of disarmament, such as measures intended to help with confidence-building, increasing openness or transparency, consolidating security, establishing machinery for the exchange of information or the publication of data on military expenditure, etc. This approach even rejects the possibility that the United Nations could play any significant role in the field of verification. It claims, in contrast, that the international community is always ready to be called in when there is a need to bless or applaud agreements reached in bilateral negotiations or more restricted forums. I repeat that we are aware that, at least in the case of chemical weapons, progress is being made on work aimed at effectively banning such weapons.

The confrontation between these two concepts of the role of multilateral efforts in disarmament became clear at the beginning of the third session. It is true that on many points of the draft final document it was possible to reach agreement. But the agreement was reached at the expense of those who uphold the universalist approach. The fact that it was not possible to reach agreement on the draft final document as a whole was due to too many concessions having been made to the marginalist concept. To go any further would have meant restricting to an unacceptable degree the role of the organized international community in disarmament matters.

This difference of approach to disarmament efforts finds its specific expression in the problem of complementarity between multilateral and bilateral action. Those of us who back the universalist approach are aware that it is the super-Powers who have the nuclear weapons in their arsenals and have the most advanced military and space technology, and that their concerns and interests in security matters raise delicate problems that require special attention. So we not only recognize their special responsibility in everything to do with disarmament, we demand it. That is why we stress that there is an intimate interdependence and complementarity between the efforts being made at various levels and in various forums, bilateral, regional multilateral and universal multilateral. No one claims that the multilateral bodies can impose any specific disarmament measures on the super-Powers. But it is legitimate to require that in negotiations on those measures,

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

particularly when they are to be of universal effect and scope, the organized international community should be granted recognition of the role that it should be playing.

The lesson we should draw from the experience of the third special session may be summed up as the need to set out in the clearest possible terms the interrelationship that should exist between the various bodies where disarmament problems are aired, and what role each of them is called upon to play so as to ensure achievement of the common objective we are all pursuing, which is to bring about general and complete disarmament under effective control, while at the same time strengthening the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the area of disarmament, particularly through this multilateral forum in which we are working as representatives of the rest of the international community.

These are the thoughts on the third special session devoted to disarmament which I wanted to share with the other members of the Conference. And now I would like to refer particularly to agenda item 5, Prevention of an arms race in outer space, which is at present being considered in the plenary of the Conference.

There is serious and legitimate concern in the international community over the prospect that outer space could be turned into the scene of a continuation of the arms race that we are currently witnessing on Earth. This concern deepens as progress in space science and technology brings man to the point where he will be able to develop and produce space weapons. That is why the overwhelming majority of countries insist that the few countries that have the capacity to deploy arms in space should renounce the possibility of doing so. Through various instruments the international community has clearly expressed its unequivocal determination to preserve space from the military rivalry that prevails on Earth, and its intention of reserving the use of this environment exclusively for peaceful uses. This wish has been followed in practice so far.

It is true that many activities carried out in space have military significance. We know that approximately three quarters of the man-made objects that are currently spinning around the Earth are performing military functions. But as has been said repeatedly, in many cases these functions have a stabilizing effect or also play a beneficial role from the civilian point of view. However, this does not detract from the assertion that the nature of space as a "province of mankind", dedicated primarily to the common interest of peoples through its peaceful use, has in practice been preserved up to now. There is no doubt that this has been possible thanks to the existence of an international legal order that has so far been able to prevent space being used for the deployment of weapons. But this legal order has proved inadequate in the face of the headlong progress of space science, which is bringing us ever closer to the moment when an arms race in outer space could be unleashed.

When we talk of preventing an arms race in outer space we are referring to something that has not happened yet, but could happen. To prevent means to forestall, anticipate and avert the occurrence of something that has not yet happened. As far as we know, no one has yet deployed weapons in space, and it

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

could even be said that true space weapons do not yet exist. So we still have time to prevent it, we can still stop it happening. We have to avoid a situation where the Powers that have the technological capacity to do so get locked in competition in space weapons. In our view, the most effective way to achieve this objective is to establish a general and complete ban on space weapons, covering the development, testing, production, deployment and stockpiling and use of space weapons.

The outer space Treaty has already established a partial ban on space weapons by prohibiting the deployment of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in space. What is needed now is an extension of this ban to any other kind of weapon that could be conceived for use in space, from space or into space. In our opinion this could be done by modifying article IV of the outer space Treaty. This instrument clearly contains a gap, a loophole that must be closed. To do this it would be sufficient to have an amendment to add a provision whereby the States parties would also undertake not to place in orbit around the Earth, or deploy in their territories or in any other place under their jurisdiction, any kind of space weapon or system of such space weapons. The amendment must also stipulate the obligation of States parties to abstain from developing, producing, testing, stockpiling or using such weapons in any form.

It may be argued that this idea is too ingenuous or too naive to be viable. On this matter it is interesting to point out that on this very day, 4 August 1988, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty, a group of six States parties to that instrument, including my own country, have approached the Governments of the three depositary States of the partial test-ban Treaty requesting the convening of a conference intended to introduce into the partial test-ban Treaty the necessary modifications to convert it into a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. This is an idea which no one so far has described as ingenuous or naive. On the contrary, it has been building up steadily to the point that the last resolution of the General Assembly on this question was approved by an overwhelming majority, with the only votes cast against being those of France, the United States and the United Kingdom. If we bear in mind that the procedure for amendment provided for in the outer space Treaty is much simpler than that laid down in the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty, the initiative intended to extend the scope of the latter should not cause any insurmountable difficulties.

It can also be said that a comprehensive ban of this kind requires very efficient and reliable verification machinery. In our view verification is absolutely essential to any disarmament measure. But the design of appropriate verification arrangements for a ban on space weaponry should not cause insuperable difficulties. We understand that the most difficult problems in the verification of a ban on space weaponry would arise in relation to Earth-based weapons. These problems are similar in many ways to those that arise in monitoring compliance with the Treaty on intermediate nuclear forces and the agreement on strategic arms which is currently being negotiated. The two super-Powers have already displayed imagination and creativity in designing the monitoring and verification measures which will be applied to the INF Treaty. Ambassador Oboukhov, the head of the Soviet delegation to the bilateral negotiations, has provided us this morning with

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

complete, detailed and very interesting information on the verification arrangements agreed for the INF Treaty, and also the problems posed by verification of the START treaty. A similar effort could be made for space weapons, which in addition could benefit from the techniques and methods applicable to long-range and intermediate-range nuclear forces.

Coming to arms deployed in space proper, the problem as we understand it is less complex. As far as we know, given the present state of the art, it is impossible to hide anything in space. Any space object can be detected and identified and its functions interpreted with almost total accuracy. A few years back this was said to be possible with any object the size of an orange situated in space. The development of space technology since then has certainly made it possible to do the same thing today with an even smaller object.

It must also be borne in mind that there are treaties in force that have operated without verification. The partial ban embodied in the outer space Treaty has been in force for more than 20 years without a real system of verification, and no one has said that the operation of this instrument has been affected thereby. There are other examples of comprehensive treaties that have operated without verification: the 1963 partial nuclear test-ban Treaty, the 1971 Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof, the 1972 Treaty on the prohibition of bacteriological and toxin weapons, the 1977 Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, the 1979 Treaty governing the activities of States on the moon and other celestial bodies. None of these agreements have required developed or sophisticated verification machinery.

As we know, it is impossible to design and develop verification arrangements which may be considered 100 per cent secure. This problem can be presented by means of the following question: How much verification is needed? - or how much verification is enough? On this point it is worth mentioning that the outer space Treaty does contain rudimentary elements of verification machinery. Article IX provides that a State party which has reason to believe that an activity or experiment planned by another State party in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, would cause potentially harmful interference with activities in peaceful exploration and use may request consultations concerning the activity or experiment. Article X provides that a State party may request an opportunity to observe the flight of space objects launched by another State. Article XI places an obligation on States parties to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the nature, conduct, location and results of their space activities. The same article also provides that the Secretary-General must disseminate that information effectively. Article XII provides that all stations, installations, equipment and space vehicles on the Moon and other celestial bodies should be open to representatives of other States. These provisions could be supplemented by an appropriate instrument to make them compatible with a treaty completely banning space weapons.

(Mr. Taylhardat, Venezuela)

The conversion of the outer space Treaty into a treaty completely banning space weapons logically requires that we should have a clear and accurate idea of what is meant by space weapons. So the amendments to be introduced in this instrument must provide for the inclusion of a definition of space weapons in the Treaty. As we know, during the deliberations of the Conference on Disarmament on item 5 of the agenda, various proposed definitions have been put forward. They all have elements in common, which leads one to think that it should not be difficult to work out a definition that would properly cover the various conceivable types of space weaponry.

As everyone knows, my country has been taking a special interest in the question of preventing an arms race in outer space. This interest has been demonstrated by our participation in the discussions, the presentation of proposals and most recently my own performance of the functions of Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee dealing with this topic. My delegation would now like to make an additional contribution by presenting a working paper containing a proposed amendment to the outer space Treaty. This document has been distributed today under the symbol CD/851. This document, which is based on the ideas that we have put forward on a number of occasions, and which I have further developed in my statement today, is intended to serve as a basis for focusing discussion on a global and comprehensive solution to the problem raised by space weaponry.

We are aware that some countries prefer the marginalist approach to this topic. Some countries would like the Conference on Disarmament to confine itself to ancillary measures, such as the preparation of a "highway code for space objects" and the like. It has even been said that "if this Conference continues to work in the hope that it can, in one fell swoop, put in place a comprehensive agreement for the prevention of an arms race in outer space, then it will never achieve anything". The same opinion, holds that what we should do is "start somewhere", and for that purpose "the elaboration of confidence-building measures, even modest ones, would surely constitute a useful beginning". We respect that opinion, but we hold the view that if there is political will it will always be possible to achieve a global and comprehensive solution, as has been done in the case of chemical weapons.

Our document, consistent with this position, is founded, as is logical, on our universalist approach to disarmament efforts and is motivated by the profound concern that we feel over the prospect that in a short time an arms race may be unleashed in outer space whose dimensions - in terms of the human, material and financial resources that it would absorb - are incalculable and morally totally unjustifiable, even if efforts are made to present it as a means of putting an end to the nuclear danger.

We trust that delegations will examine our proposal with the attention it merits, and for our part we will receive and analyse with interest any comments or observations made.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Venezuela for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Kostov.

Mr. KOSTOV (Bulgaria): Mr. President, speaking for the first time in this chamber, it is a great pleasure to greet you as President of the Conference on Disarmament for the month of August. My delegation is happy to work under your skilful guidance, as the distinguished representative of Indonesia, with which Bulgaria by tradition maintains very friendly relations. I would also like to express my appreciation of the competent manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Teja of India, guided the Conference's work during the first month of its summer session. We shall miss his experience and wisdom, as he has left the Conference to assume other important duties. The delegation of Bulgaria will continue to co-operate with the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Milan Komatina, and his Deputy, Ambassador Berasategui, as well as with members of their staff.

May I use this opportunity to thank all colleagues who have expressed words of welcome upon my appointment as head of the delegation of Bulgaria to the Conference on Disarmament? I shall be honoured to work together with all representatives, and pledge the full co-operation of my delegation. I wish every success to our departing colleagues, Ambassador Dávid Meizster of Hungary, Ambassador Mansur Ahmad of Pakistan and Ambassador Tin Tun of Burma.

The Conference is honoured today by the presence of the distinguished head of the Soviet delegation to the bilateral USSR/United States negotiations on space and nuclear weapons, Ambassador Aleksei Oboukhov. My delegation is grateful for the very interesting and detailed information he offered us today on the state of the negotiations. We would like to wish Ambassador Oboukhov new successes at the bilateral talks, whose basic role in disarmament is difficult to overstate.

Mr. President, one month after the third special session, the Conference on Disarmament continues its work deeply influenced by hopes and frustrations generated at the session in New York. It has repeatedly been pointed out in this chamber that although the special session did a remarkable job in considering a number of important proposals, it did not manage to complete its work with an agreed concluding document. This unfortunate event is a matter of concern not only to those who meet in the Conference on Disarmament. It is being analysed in depth by Governments, political movements and peace organizations in many countries all over the world.

A few days ago the Commission on Foreign Affairs of the Bulgarian Parliament organized a series of hearings where officials from the Foreign Ministry testified on the outcome of the special session. A major point made at those meetings was that, rather than become involved in a prolonged debate on missed opportunities, the international community should face the present situation with new sense of resolve, drawing the necessary conclusions and continuing its quest for disarmament.

It is in this spirit that the delegation of Bulgaria endorses the idea of the distinguished Ambassador of Sweden, Mrs. Theorin, expressed in her plenary statement on 7 July, that we may all be entitled to make tentative interpretations on the basis of emerging consensus language and use it as a starting-point for further joint actions in disarmament. The positive developments at the special session are encouraging indeed. They must be

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

preserved and reinforced. The indispensable role of the Conference on Disarmament was also reiterated. This forum should redouble its efforts to make substantive progress on such items as nuclear disarmament, a nuclear test ban, prevention of an arms race in outer space and a chemical weapons convention.

Bulgaria values the contributions made by many delegations to the consideration of priority disarmament issues at the special session. An extensive exchange was held on such newly emerging concepts as non-military threats to peace and security, non-provocative defence, reasonable sufficiency and non-offensive military postures. I should like to refer to the proposals advanced by Soviet Foreign Minister E. Shevardnadze on naval confidence-building measures, an international monitoring and verification agency under the United Nations, and an international space monitoring agency. Similar in nature is the Six Nations' new initiative for the establishment of a United Nations integrated multilateral verification system and the preparation of an expert study outlining its functions. Equally important are the proposals put forward by a number of countries from the Non-aligned Movement to ban the use of scientific and technological achievements for the development and production of new weapons of mass destruction and new systems of conventional arms. The action plan submitted by Prime Minister R. Gandhi of India aims at achieving general and complete disarmament by the year 2010. A number of other proposals to which I will not refer here for lack of time, including proposals by the socialist countries, may offer fresh opportunities for early progress in disarmament.

Like any human undertaking, the special session has taught us some lessons which may be extremely important for the future. May I briefly discuss some of them?

My delegation, together with other delegations, mentioned at the preparatory stage the possibility of confining the deliberations at the special session to a few specific questions on the disarmament agenda. With the historic Final Document at hand, States may choose, on similar future occasions, to take up only a few specific proposals. If such a process is started early enough during the preparation for a special session, possible consensus language could eventually be included in documents focusing on such proposals rather than attempting to rewrite fundamental international instruments such as the Final Document.

We do recognize that disarmament issues are interrelated. This is duly reflected in the Final Document, which preserves its validity today, though some of its provisions may have become somewhat obsolete. A certain analogy could be drawn with the Charter of the United Nations, with the risk of being slightly incorrect. The Charter also contains provisions which may now look a bit old, without rendering the whole legal framework completely useless. On the contrary, the Charter serves as a universally recognized basis of all international efforts to achieve the principal goals of the United Nations.

The Final Document of 1978 plays a similar role in the field of disarmament. The strategy set out therein should be reviewed and further developed regularly in a dynamic manner. The existing interrelationship between disarmament issues has to be respected. But progress should not be

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

held hostage to agreement on disarmament strategy as a whole. Otherwise, we might find ourselves in an absurd situation when even modest steps may be impossible unless general consensus is reached on all disarmament items - be they important or secondary, global or regional. Striving for comprehensiveness might become an obstacle to progress on issues ripe for solution.

Secondly, we may need to define the exact role of consensus. This method is, no doubt, extremely important in dealing with security issues. Consensus decisions acquire additional moral and political authority and stand greater chances for implementation. The rule of consensus should not be viewed, however, only as a right of veto. It also implies an obligation on States to consider constructive proposals co-operatively, taking into account the legitimate security interests of other States. It should further mean making genuine efforts to meet the concerns expressed at least half-way and actively search for common denominators which could ensure progress in the interests of all. Such an observation may be valid both for United Nations special sessions and for the Conference on Disarmament.

The INF Treaty has initiated a real process of nuclear disarmament. The beginning is encouraging and gives rise to great expectations for the future. This is a breakthrough which will hopefully make possible further steps to widen and deepen areas of agreement. Any attempt to "compensate" for the weapons being destroyed runs the risk of negating the value of the Treaty itself. Little security and stability can be achieved if disarmament measures in one area are used as a pretext to initiate an arms race in another. The international community also expects an early Soviet-United States agreement on a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic arsenals. The two major nuclear-weapon States have made an important political commitment to achieve that goal. Today Ambassador Oboukhov of the USSR has reaffirmed his country's determination to fulfil the stated objective. There is no doubt that such a result would become another breakthrough in nuclear disarmament, strengthening strategic stability and further improving the international climate.

Bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament are obviously insufficient. The existence of nuclear weapons threatens the survival of all nations. Hence the need for multilateral efforts to reduce the nuclear danger by building upon bilateral successes. A multilateral approach is also required because there are more than two nuclear-weapon States in the world. Bilateral and multilateral efforts do not exclude each other and should be viewed as mutually complementary.

The membership of the Conference on Disarmament facilitates the initiation of such a multilateral process, which could be channelled through an appropriate subsidiary body. A beginning has been made with the holding of informal plenary meetings on item 2, which should be followed by the establishment of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate. Participation by all nuclear-weapon States in the nuclear disarmament process is indispensable. The delegation of Bulgaria has on several occasions suggested that the CD should set up a sub-committee composed of the five nuclear-weapon States, having a negotiating mandate, with a view to contributing to multilateral consideration of item 2 by the Conference itself. Such a body

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

could start with the elaboration of the specific prerequisite for all nuclear-weapon States to join the nuclear reduction process. This could mark the beginning of a second stage of nuclear disarmament.

In recent years the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to move beyond general plenary consideration of the item on a nuclear test ban. Many States expressed their genuine concern about this situation at the special session. Continued testing of new designs of nuclear weapons means that the nuclear-weapon States are projecting the nuclear threat into the future of mankind. It is our belief that the main reason for the present lack of progress is that some nuclear-weapon States continue to rely on "counterforce" versions of nuclear deterrence. The destabilizing impact of such military concepts on international relations is widely recognized by Governments, the public and scientific communities. States always relate disarmament to security. This might be an important reason why countries represented in the CD should attach greater significance to doctrinal aspects of a nuclear test ban, which could help identify elements giving rise to serious security concern on the part of other States and hampering progress.

The international community marks this year the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the non-proliferation Treaty, the importance of which has further increased with the beginning of a real process of nuclear disarmament. Tomorrow, we are going to celebrate the 25th anniversary of another fundamental multilateral instrument - the Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. This is yet another occasion to underline the role of an NTB in the disarmament process as a whole. The Moscow Treaty contains an obligation, reaffirmed in the non-proliferation Treaty, that all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, will seek to achieve "the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time" and "continue negotiations to this end". The NTB item should remain on the CD's agenda as an issue having the highest priority.

Bulgaria welcomes the initial progress made at the full-scale, step-by-step Soviet-United States negotiations on the issues related to nuclear testing. We very much hope that these bilateral talks will lead in the foreseeable future to the ultimate goal - a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The Conference on Disarmament is the most appropriate forum for the multilateral negotiation of a treaty on the general and complete prohibition of nuclear weapon tests. The situation is intolerable when the Conference is lagging behind bilateral efforts, even in terms of verification only. The CD's membership also includes other nuclear-weapon States and a number of non-nuclear-weapon States. They ought to be involved in the negotiating process, if we are to arrive at a treaty with universal application. These negotiations should cover all interrelated aspects of a CTB. An interesting proposal to this end has recently been reintroduced by the distinguished representative of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Vejvoda, providing for a more flexible framework to begin practical work on a nuclear test ban. Accepting this proposal would not prevent the CD from following a step-by-step approach, which could start with consideration of issues related to verification of and compliance with the future treaty. The Bulgarian delegation believes that the Conference should also benefit from the proposal of the Soviet delegation for

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

the setting up of a group of scientific experts to work out recommendations on the structure and functions of a verification system for any possible agreement on a NTB.

Bulgaria attaches great importance to negative security assurances extended to non-nuclear-weapon States. Implementation of the INF Treaty will significantly improve the security of many States. Various kinds of nuclear weapons, however, remain deployed all over the world, thus threatening the survival of non-nuclear-weapon States. Pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament, the security of such States, which are not in a position to become the source of a nuclear threat, should be uniformly and unconditionally guaranteed in a legally binding form against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Negotiations to that end have been under way for 10 years now. As Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov of Bulgaria pointed out to the Conference on Disarmament last April:

"We are convinced that the time has come for bolder approaches which would shift the negotiations out of stalemate. The United Nations General Assembly has urged us to do so. There are already interesting proposals on this subject. Positive movement in this direction would have significant impact on the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime."

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is also an issue of universal concern. This is an objective agreed upon by consensus, both bilaterally and multilaterally in the Conference on Disarmament. The Ad hoc Committee on item 5 offers an opportunity for all member States to contribute to the achievement of that common objective.

The delegation of Bulgaria believes that work in that Committee should focus on the existing proposals and future initiatives, with a view to agreeing on appropriate measures to ban the introduction of any kind of weapons in outer space. An interesting paper on a possible approach to this issue has been submitted today by our distinguished colleague Ambassador Taylhardat of Venezuela. My delegation will study it with care. There are various other proposals which have been submitted in the Ad hoc Committee, and we believe that the time is ripe now to start with an ASAT ban. The existing legal régime for outer space does not exclude the possibility of developing conventional types of such weapons. The current virtual moratorium on testing of ASAT systems, honoured by both the Soviet Union and the United States, facilitates a beginning of concrete negotiations on such a ban. The working paper on "Main provisions of a treaty on the prohibition of anti-satellite weapons and ways to ensure the immunity of space objects" (CD/777) submitted by the delegations of the German Democratic Republic and Mongolia could serve as a useful basis for such work. Various elements of the Soviet idea for the establishment of an international system of verification of the non-deployment of weapons of any kind in outer space could also be successfully used for the purposes of an ASAT ban.

There are a number of complicated issues of definition and technical issues which will have to be addressed in dealing with an ASAT ban. Such problems should be considered by an appropriate group of governmental experts

(Mr. Kostov, Bulgaria)

to provide technical expertise and guidance to the Ad hoc Committee in overcoming possible difficulties. The Bulgarian delegation has advanced specific proposals aimed at making progress on this issue in the Committee.

We learned with keen interest of the proposal made by the distinguished representative of Argentina, Ambassador Cámpora, that members of the CD should make solemn unilateral declarations that none of them has deployed weapons in outer space on a permanent basis. Implementation of this proposal could become an important confidence-building measure, introducing more openness and transparency into outer space activities related to military matters. Because of their confidence-building nature, such unilateral steps require no verification, and would be a good starting-point for more specific partial measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The prohibition of chemical weapons is another important issue which I intend to discuss in more detail on some further occasions. My delegation regrets the fact that for a number of years now the Conference on Disarmament has not been making much progress in its substantive work on several items. It seems that the Conference is slowly moving away from discharging its responsibilities as a negotiating body. We feel that this tendency should be halted. The delegation of Bulgaria believes that it is time for the CD to undertake concrete action on all priority items on its agenda, and is determined to make its contribution towards this end.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. I should like to know whether any other member wishes to take the floor at this stage.

The representative of Switzerland has asked for the floor. In accordance with the decision taken by the Conference at its 436th plenary meeting, I give him the floor.

Mr. OCHSNER (Switzerland): Thank you, Mr. President. With our very best wishes for a successful chairmanship, we would like to draw your attention briefly and in all due modesty to a problem of a rather administrative nature, but not without a certain significance for our country. Last Monday the Swiss Confederation celebrated its 697th anniversary. 1 August is considered throughout the country as our national day. It was absolutely no formal obstacle indeed for United Nations Headquarters and the Conference on Disarmament to ignore this day. The question comes up whether it would not be possible, as an expression of international courtesy perhaps to respect the afternoon, I repeat, the afternoon of 1 August in future. Could you think of an international conference meeting even under United Nations status on Independence Day in the United States of America, on 7 November in the Soviet Union or on 14 July in Paris?

We really do not want to make it a State affair. At a glance it might even appear that the people of Geneva, as far as they are Swiss, do not pay great attention to this day either, but this is not really true and it is very definitely not the case in the surrounding communes and in the remaining 3,000 towns and villages all over the country. As to Monday afternoon's

(Mr. Ochsner, Switzerland)

meeting of Working Group B of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, we hope that by silently accepting the facts we made a very small contribution to the acceleration of the negotiations on the pertinent subject.

So far, a mental footnote to the problem just for consideration in 1989, à prendre ou à laisser, to which we do not expect any formal reply.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Switzerland for his statement and for the wishes he addressed to me. In connection with his statement, I should like to assure him that the Conference fully appreciates the hospitality of the Geneva and Swiss authorities, and the fact that our work continued during the anniversary of the Swiss Confederation should not, in any respect, be construed as meaning that such an important event was being forgotten.

The secretariat has circulated today an informal paper containing a list of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the coming week. As usual, the timetable contained therein is merely indicative and therefore subject to change, if necessary. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: As there is no other business for today, I now intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Tuesday, 9 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.