

FINAL RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 28 February 1983, at 3.30 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG

(Mongolia)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. B. OUL-ROUIS
Mr. A. TAFFAR
Mr. M. MAACHI

Argentina: Mr. J.C. CARASALES
Mr. R. GARCIA MORITAN

Australia: Mr. R. STEELE
Mr. T. FINDLAY

Belgium: Mr. A. ONKELINX
Mr. J.M. NOIRFALISSE

Brazil: Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA

Bulgaria: Mr. K. TELLALOV
Mr. B. GRINBERG
Mr. P. POPTCHEV
Mr. C. PRAMOV

Burma: U MAUNG MAUNG GYI
U TIN KYAW HLAING
U THAN TUN

Canada: Mr. D.S. McPHAIL
Mr. G.R. SKINNER
Mr. M. HAMBLIN

China: Mr. LI LUYE
Mrs. WANG ZHIYUN
Mr. PAN ZHENGIANG

Cuba: Mr. P. NUNEZ MOSQUERA

Czechoslovakia: Mr. M. VEJVODA
Mr. A. CIMA
Mr. J. JIRUSEK

Ethiopia: Miss K. SINEGIORGIS
Mr. F. YOHANNES

France: Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE
Mr. M. COUTHURES

German Democratic Republic: Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. H. THIELICKE
Mr. F. SAYATZ
Mr. M. NOTZEL
Mr. M. SCHNEIDER

Germany, Federal Republic of: Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. F. ELBE
Mr. W.E. VON DEM HAGEN
Mr. J. PFIRSCHKE

Hungary: Mr. I. KOMIVES
Mr. F. GADJA
Mr. T. TOTTH

India: Mr. N. SETH

Indonesia: Mr. I.H. WIRAATMADJA
Mr. HARYOMATARAM
Mr. F. QASIM

Iran: Mr. F. SHAHABI

Italy: Mr. M. ALESSI
Mr. B. CABRAS
Mr. C.M. OLIVA
Mr. E. DI GIOVANNI

Japan: Mr. R. IMAI
Mr. M. TAKAHASHI
Mr. T. KAWAKITA
Mr. K. TANAKA
Mr. T. ARAT

Kenya: Mr. D.D.C. DON NANJIRA

Mexico: Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Mrs. Z. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO

Mongolia: Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. L. ERDENCHULUUN
Mr. J. CHOINKHOR
Mr. S.O. BOLD
Mr. O. CHIMIDREGZEN

Morocco: Mr. A. SKALLI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands: Mr. F. VAN DONGEN
Mr. H. WAGENMAKERS
Mr. J. RAMAKER
Mr. R.J. AKKERMAN

Nigeria: Mr. A.N.C. NWAZOMUDOH
Mr. J.O. OBOH
Mr. A.A. ADEPOJU
Miss I.E.C. UKEJE

Pakistan: Mr. M. AHMAD
Mr. T. ALTAF

Peru: Mr. P. CANNOCK
Mr. V. ROJAS

Poland: Mr. S. KONIK
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ
Mr. T. STROJWAS

Romania: Mr. T. MELESCANU

Sri Lanka: Mr. A.T. JAYAKODDY
Mr. H.M.G.S. PALIHAKKARA

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD
Mr. C.L. HYLTIENIUS
Mr. G. EKHOLM
Mr. H. BERGLUND

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. B.P. PROKOFIEV
Mr. R.M. TIMERBAEV
Mr. G. VORONTZO
Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV
Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN
Mr. G.N. VASHADZE

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE
Mr. L.J. MIDDLETON
Miss J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

Mr. L.G. FIELDS
Mr. M.D. BUSBY
Mr. P. CORDEN
Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER
Mr. W. HECKROTTE
Mr. J.J. HOGAN
Mr. R.L. HORNE
Mr. J. MARTIN

Venezuela:Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Secretary of the Committee on
Disarmament and Personal
Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the
Committee on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 198th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Italy, Hungary, Japan, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Kenya, Algeria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Argentina and China.

I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Alessi.

Mr. ALESSI (Italy) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, at this meeting which is to be the Committee's last formal meeting under your chairmanship, allow me to express to you and your delegation my appreciation of the efforts you have made during this month of February to launch the Committee on the work of its 1983 session. I think it is regrettable that in spite of all these efforts we are obliged today to admit that one month after the opening of its session the Committee still has no agenda and no programme of work.

This situation seems to me to be all the more disappointing in that it has had what in our view are unwarranted consequences, namely, the paralysis of all the substantive work of our Committee, although our recent discussions with respect to the agenda convince me that an agreement is within our reach. As regards the proposals put forward by the group of socialist countries for the possible addition of items 9 and 10 to our agenda, consultations have indicated that some progress has been achieved.

In addition, with regard to the most important of the questions we are concerned with, namely, the proposal of the Group of 21, supported by the group of socialist countries, to add a new item on the prevention of nuclear war, a large measure of consensus seems to exist on the substance of the matter: the desirability of this Committee's taking up the question of the prevention of nuclear war and examining it in substance is not in dispute. The delegations on whose behalf I am speaking have shown all the interest and importance they attach to this question either through their replies to the United Nations Secretary-General in conformity with resolution 36/81 B, or through their active participation in the discussions on this subject at the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Document CD/341 submitted by the Group of 21 states that "all nations have both the right as well as the obligation to work collectively to dispel the danger of a nuclear holocaust". We entirely agree: this objective underlies our future action in this Committee.

At one of our informal meetings, speaking on behalf of a number of delegations, I proposed a form of wording which, if added to the usual formulation of item 2 of our agenda, would cover this question also. This form of wording places the prevention of nuclear war in its proper context, namely, that of the prevention of all wars. Other formulations and other solutions could be envisaged. Our delegations are prepared to consider any suggestion which would bring this important matter before the Committee while at the same time heeding a requirement they consider essential. It seems to me enough to emphasize here that the political conditions for reaching such an agreement exist.

It is also generally recognized that, from the point of view of substance, a thorough consideration of a broad range of possibilities and situations will be necessary. In a matter of such importance and seriousness, it is essential

(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

that all the legitimate concerns of the various countries should be taken into account and should be expressed in our debates without our losing sight of the vital and urgent need to seek to bring about practical and appropriate measures for the protection of human civilization from the unimaginable disaster of a nuclear war.

If all sides show a willingness to take account of the fundamental positions at stake, a joint drafting effort should enable us to overcome the difficulties. This is no doubt a task that will have to be tackled by the Chairman of the Committee for the month of March, the distinguished representative of Morocco, to whom I should like here and now to offer my warm wishes for his success, as well as the promise of our full co-operation.

Allow me, in concluding my statement, to touch on one point which seems to me important, namely, the need for the substantive work of the Committee to be resumed without delay, and to that end to make the following proposal.

I propose that the Committee should adopt today, under your chairmanship, all the agenda items on which there is no disagreement, namely, items 1 to 7. Secondly, I should like to propose that all the organizational matters relating to the Committee's work on those items, that is, the questions of the re-establishment of the relevant working groups, their mandates and their chairmen, and a provisional work programme, subject to revision, should be discussed at once. I should like, thirdly, to propose that the other organizational matters, such as the participation of non-member States, should also be settled at once.

Since the prospects of our reaching an agreement with respect to the three other items proposed for our agenda are favourable, it would seem to me that there is no justification for any objection to my proposals, for such objections would merely put off still further the starting of our normal work. I would therefore express the hope that we can speedily agree on the proposals I have just made, and that consultations towards the solution of the questions still pending with respect to the agenda can be continued intensively in the coming days so that a speedy and just solution can be reached.

Mr. KOMIVES (Hungary): The group of socialist delegations has entrusted me with the task of making the following statement today on behalf of the socialist countries members of the Committee on Disarmament.

The 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament started four weeks ago in a situation fraught with increasing tension and a growing threat of nuclear war. The better part of the general statements delivered here in the previous four weeks have reflected a profound anxiety about the dangerous course of events. The majority of the delegates who have taken the floor so far have found it necessary to emphasize the grave concern of the peoples of their own countries, and that of mankind all over the world, for the survival of the human race. The general tone of those statements clearly pointed to the fact that 1983 is a crucial year in the history of mankind, and a decisive one for the fate of disarmament negotiations.

Under present conditions, the Committee on Disarmament, the single forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations, is expected to intensify its efforts aimed at serious negotiations on the most urgent questions, in order to achieve concrete results capable of reducing tensions and the threat of nuclear war, contributing to the cessation of the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race, and

(Mr. Komives, Hungary)

leading to agreements on real measures of disarmament. That is what the universal community of nations expects of this Committee. That is what the very basic interest of the peoples of every State, the interest in strengthening international peace and security, demand from this Committee.

With all this clearly in mind, the group of socialist delegations feels it necessary at this juncture to express its deep concern over the fact that although four weeks have passed since the opening of the present session the Committee on Disarmament has not been able to embark upon any kind of negotiations. As a matter of fact, the Committee has not been able to settle even the customary questions of an organizational and procedural character. No agreement has been reached on the agenda for the current session, on the programme of work for the first part of this session, or on the establishment of subsidiary bodies — designed to conduct practical negotiations on various issues — not to mention the mandates and chairmanships of such subsidiary bodies. As a consequence of all this, the Committee on Disarmament is deprived of the possibility of fulfilling its real function — the function of a forum for multilateral negotiations in the field of disarmament.

The delegations of the socialist countries feel obliged to state that the abnormal situation which prevails in the Committee is a direct consequence of the position adopted by delegations of Western States which refuse to discuss in the Committee concrete measures designed to prevent nuclear war, and reject the proposal to have this item appropriately included in the agenda.

The proposal concerning the prevention of nuclear war was in fact made originally by the group of socialist countries. A proposal to the same effect was also developed by the group of non-aligned and neutral countries. The proposals, however, were not made in pursuance of the particular interest of one or another State or group of States. It is indeed based on a universal demand expressed in a number of important documents adopted in the course of several years in various international forums, in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and in the documents of different regional and political bodies, as well as in official documents of a more limited nature. In the drafting and adoption of all those documents the States whose delegations are sitting around this table have all, without any exception, taken part and given their support. It applies even to those States whose representatives — denying their former selves, and going back upon their previous positions — have now taken a stubbornly negative position in face of that universal demand. The proposal on the prevention of nuclear war has been dictated by that demand, and by the exceptional urgency and seriousness of the problem. The realization of the proposal is demanded by its own inherent logic.

The obstacles put by Western delegations in the way of that proposal show clearly and convincingly who is indeed against the prevention of nuclear war, who is in favour of building up the nuclear threat, who is pursuing a foreign policy based on nuclear blackmail, the first use of nuclear weapons, the possibility of limited and winnable nuclear wars, etc. The position of Western States on the question of the prevention of nuclear war reveals the true value of the declarations often made by high-ranking representatives of those countries about their peaceful intentions.

(Mr. Komives, Hungary)

The delegations of the socialist countries represented in the Committee on Disarmament continue to strive for the consideration of concrete multilateral measures aimed at preventing nuclear war. To that end they continue to stand for the inclusion of a separate item in the Committee's agenda, and for the establishment of an ad hoc working group designed to deal with that question.

Another factor hindering the orderly beginning of practical work in the Committee is the repeated attempts by certain delegations aimed at imposing a one-track approach upon the rest of the members, while at the same time pretending to be sincerely interested in solving organizational matters without delay. Occasionally, arbitrary conditions are being put forward for the discussion of one item or another of the agenda, while the generally accepted rules and practice of conducting negotiations in the Committee as in other multilateral forums are being completely ignored. The most striking and totally inadmissible are the manoeuvres of one or two delegations blocking the implementation even of resolutions which the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus.

The delegations of the socialist countries are convinced that the solution of organizational and procedural questions must be subordinated to the primary task of conducting purposeful, efficient negotiations, with special emphasis on questions of the highest priority, in order to elaborate concrete international agreements on those specific problems. That attitude should be applied, first and foremost, to the creation of subsidiary bodies and the elaboration of their mandates. The delegations of the socialist countries declare with full determination that they will not allow such a situation to occur when the question of subsidiary bodies is used in the Committee as a smoke-screen to cover up the refusal of one power to conclude international disarmament agreements, in particular, a treaty concerning the question of number one priority on the agenda.

It is the firm view of the delegations of socialist countries that serious evaluation should be given to the prospects of real progress in those subsidiary bodies which have been in existence for some time. It is hardly feasible to continue automatically the deliberations in those bodies where the situation is characterized by stagnation. The resumption of activity in those subsidiary bodies, in a situation where the differences among the participants have been prevailing for a long time, would be not only a sheer waste of the time and efforts of members of the Committee, but would even further complicate in the future the achievement of agreements on the important questions entrusted to those bodies.

The prospects must be evaluated in a realistic manner, without raising false hopes either in ourselves or in public opinion. When the Committee has a clear picture of the number of subsidiary bodies with a real possibility of making progress, the next steps could then be taken. The first among them should be the definition of mandates for those subsidiary bodies. The subsequent step would be the allocation of chairmanships. In that latter context the group of socialist countries has already stated

(Mr. Komives, Hungary)

its position. It is prepared to show flexibility in that matter, but the basic principle must be clearly defined. The delegations of socialist countries are ready to accept either the rotation of chairmanships in the subsidiary bodies or the maintenance in 1983 of the chairmanships of those bodies as in 1982. This question should be decided on the basis of a fair and equitable distribution of posts among the groups of delegations. The group of socialist countries declare with all firmness that they will not tolerate any discrimination or any infringement of their rights and interests.

In conclusion, I wish — on behalf of the delegations of the socialist countries — to urge all the other delegations of the Committee on Disarmament to redouble their efforts in order to solve the organizational and procedural questions in a constructive spirit, with a view to achieving reasonable and acceptable compromises, compromises that are capable and suitable to permit the Committee to conduct its activities, concentrating all its time and power on real negotiations on matters of substance. The delegations of socialist countries do not want to impose their will on any delegation or any group of delegations, but certainly will not allow others to succeed in such attempts.

As they have been doing throughout the last four weeks, under the unceasing and tireless guidance of the Committee's Chairman, who undoubtedly deserves the full recognition of every delegation, the representatives of the socialist countries are ready to continue intensive consultations. They set no other preconditions but the fundamental requirement that every other delegation should act and co-operate in a similar constructive spirit, giving up the idea of imposing one-sided demands on others. Given such will and readiness, the Committee on Disarmament should be able to solve all the questions that have up to now prevented it from fulfilling its duty.

Mr. IMAI (Japan): I do not think it necessary to emphasize here again the unique experience Japan had in the matter of nuclear weapons. There should be no question that my delegation attaches great importance to the issue of the prevention of nuclear war. The view of my Government on this matter, to cite one example, was made clear during the second special session on disarmament last summer, in its reply to the Secretary-General of the United Nations as requested by General Assembly resolution 36/81 B. Our reply is contained in document A/S-12/11/Add.5. As we pointed out in this document, we hold the view that "we should use every means and avail ourselves of every opportunity to prevent a nuclear war from ever occurring". Based on this fundamental standpoint the Government of Japan, in the same document, reiterated its conviction that "the most effective way to establish a solid foundation for efforts to prevent nuclear war is to promote disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament".

It is from this viewpoint that my delegation expressed its strong interest in the bilateral nuclear disarmament talks now going on in Geneva and urged the two negotiators to exert the maximum possible

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

efforts in order to achieve substantive progress and early agreement with a view to the real reduction of their nuclear arsenals. These exercises should be performed from the point of view of global stability, as I have had an opportunity to point out during my earlier intervention.

We also stressed in our reply to the Secretary-General the essential importance of compliance by all Member States with the United Nations Charter if wars, conventional as well as nuclear, are to be prevented.

In the same spirit we joined the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands in presenting, at the second special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, a working paper entitled "Prevention of war, in particular nuclear war". I believe that, without taking time to elaborate the details, this document can still constitute a most appropriate basis for approaching the question we are now faced with.

As my delegation gave very serious thought to the formulation of the proposed agenda item, it has been our firm conviction that there can be no one, not only in this chamber but in the whole world community, who would deny the crucial importance of the question of the prevention of nuclear war. At the same time, however, we cannot close our eyes to the reality that the balance of power, including both nuclear and conventional, has been a major contributory factor to preserving the peace and security of the world, and has so far succeeded in preventing an outbreak of nuclear exchanges. On the basis of our recognition of this reality, we believe that the question of preventing nuclear war has to be looked at in the wider context of preventing any armed conflicts, nuclear or conventional.

We have been discussing this question and other procedural and organizational matters already for a month. These discussions and consultations which you, as Chairman of this Committee, have conducted, have been in themselves a sufficient indication to convince us that the matter we are dealing with, namely the prevention of nuclear war, is a complex issue, and here I shall refrain from discussing the various strategic and technical elements that may be involved in such considerations -- I would merely like to recall that in my opening statement at this session I emphasized that high ideals and attractive formulations do not, in themselves, constitute effective disarmament unless they can be turned into effective and meaningful negotiations. We need, therefore, to continue our search for the most effective ways and means to handle this issue through general and informal debate.

Finally, allow me to express the strong desire of my delegation that the further consideration of the question should not become an obstacle preventing us from sitting down and continuing substantive work on those items of the agenda which no one disputes and everyone is ready and willing to work on.

Mr. FIELDS (United States of America): I welcome this opportunity to place on record the importance which my delegation attaches to the issue of the prevention of nuclear war, and the frustration which we feel at being prevented from resolving the issue of how to deal with this important subject.

The record is clear regarding the concern of my Government for the prevention of nuclear war. We are hard at work at this critical task. In this room on 4 February, Vice-President Bush reiterated the commitment which we attach to achieving significant reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. He said: "The elimination of the threat of nuclear war is clearly of paramount importance to all of us, and the United States fully accepts its special responsibilities in this area. We are recognizing this responsibility in the most effective way we know -- here in Geneva, in good faith, across the negotiating table from the Soviet Union."

We are motivated in this effort by our dedication to strengthening international stability and increasing the security of all States. Our position on this subject is not a new one.

Eliminating the threat of nuclear war has been at the forefront of United States efforts since nuclear weapons were first developed. Our offer in 1946 to bring nuclear weapons and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under international control is a matter of historical record. The year 1963 recorded the memorandum of understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union regarding the establishment of a direct communications link -- the so-called "hot line" agreement. Later the same year the United States and the Soviet Union signed and ratified the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water.

The United States played a major role in the achievement of the non-proliferation Treaty and then in the 1970s focused on efforts to halt the nuclear arms race by establishing ceilings on certain categories of these weapons. We proposed significant reductions in nuclear arsenals at that time, but this, unfortunately, was rejected at that time by the Soviet Union. Their earlier rejection notwithstanding, the Soviet Union is at the table with us here in Geneva, where the issue of significant reductions in strategic ballistic missile warheads is under active negotiation.

President Reagan in November 1981 renewed our proposal to the Soviet Union to develop effective measures that would reduce the danger of the risk of surprise attack and the chance of war arising out of uncertainty or miscalculation. On 17 June last year, President Reagan informed the second special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly of an initiative which the United States was undertaking related to the issue of the prevention of nuclear war. He announced that the United States had undertaken to explore ways to increase understanding and communication between the United States and the Soviet Union in times of both peace and crisis. He said: "We will approach the Soviet Union with proposals for reciprocal exchanges in such areas as advance notification of major strategic exercises that otherwise might be misinterpreted, advance notification of ICBM launches within, as well as beyond, national boundaries, and an expanded exchange of strategic forces data".

(Mr. Fields, United States)

Last November, President Reagan revealed some of the measures which he had proposed to the Soviet Union in order to reduce the risk of accident and misunderstanding. The first involved advance notification of all United States and Soviet test launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles. It also concerned notification regarding sea-launched and land-based ballistic missiles such as those under negotiation. President Reagan also revealed that he had proposed advance notification of major military exercises. Thirdly, the President described a proposal to engage in a wide-ranging exchange of basic data about United States and Soviet nuclear forces. Lastly, he indicated that the United States would carefully examine any possible improvements which might be undertaken to the current hot-line direct communication system.

These proposals were made to reduce surprise and uncertainty arising from missile tests and major military exercises, and to remove some of the mutual ignorance and suspicion which has persisted despite numerous efforts to foster greater transparency in military postures and intentions.

Our record is clearly one dedicated to the achievement of effective measures to prevent nuclear war and we are not at all reticent about addressing this issue in this Committee. We have expressed our support for including an appropriate item on our agenda. The only question is how best to reflect the issue. We joined with other delegations of the western group in suggesting a formulation for an agenda item which included as part of the prevention of nuclear war the prevention of war in general. This is a critical concern aptly reflected in the Final Document and should not be implicitly precluded. Categorical rejection of this approach absolutely bewilders my delegation, although the statement we have heard here today by the distinguished representative of Hungary has given us some insights. What we seem to be facing is a purposeful blockage of the entire work of this Committee. The linkage which he developed between the issue of the prevention of nuclear war and other questions makes it clear that our present impasse is part of a broader effort to "take back" last year's agreement on a working group on a nuclear test ban.

Are we to understand that, if we do not accept the positions advocated by certain countries, there can be no agenda item dealing with the prevention of nuclear war nor any serious work by this Committee? I sincerely hope not. Speaking for my own delegation, we are reasonably flexible on wording, so long as our position is accurately reflected. We assume similar flexibility from others, and we hope they will consider our proposal seriously and offer constructive suggestions of their own. This is certainly an issue on which reasonable accommodation will redound to the better security of all mankind.

We have lost enough time. We should resolve this issue, and get down to serious work. Our distinguished Italian colleague, Ambassador Alessi, has made a formal proposal which moves us in that direction. I urge its acceptance.

Mr. McPHAIL (Canada): This is an extraordinary meeting; my statement will not be extraordinary but it is intended to be an appropriate statement. We are here still attempting to cope with the agenda, on the last day of the first month of the Committee's 1983 session. I have not heard anybody in this Committee attempt to deny that the subject-matter dealt with in document CD/341 is important work. The only problem that I have heard raised has to do with how this

(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

Committee can come to grips with the prevention of nuclear war, bearing in mind that this is not the General Assembly either in its regular or special session; and that it is not the United Nations Disarmament Commission, but a multilateral negotiating committee. It is normal that in a body of this kind those proposing an item for inclusion in the agenda explain the rationale for their proposal and that they go on to give some indication of what it is they intend to be covered in the consideration by the Committee of the item they propose. I think, therefore, that we should regard document CD/341 of 4 February as the point of departure. Certainly as the point of departure that I have used in trying to understand what it is the Committee is being asked to do. Mr. Chairman, it is almost a month later, but we still do not have any more indication about the specifics of what is intended than we had on 4 February in document CD/341.

I have had some difficulty in understanding precisely what was intended, although there are indeed references there to views, proposals and practical suggestions submitted to the Second Special Session, as well as other matters. I should like to go back to paragraph 20 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to attempt to discern what, indeed, the sponsors had in mind. Paragraph 20, it seems to me, is about as close as one can come in the original text, to what it is people here have intended. I will not read the full text, but I do see in the proposal some interesting elements. Some of them, such as the need, in this context, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, have been omitted and I am not sure why. However, one could argue that there are others as well, and that it is not necessarily something against the proposal, but I am trying to find out what it is that the Committee in negotiations might undertake, and thus far, we have not had those specifics. I find it difficult to understand why it is that supporters of the proposal say that others are against the prevention of nuclear war because they ask questions. In asking a question you are assumed to be against preventing nuclear war. I think the public understands very well that it is hardly the logical case to put before a Committee of this kind, that is supposed to be a serious multilateral negotiating body.

In short, I suggest that it is not really appropriate to be presented, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, with a proposal for an agenda item on which we are intended to negotiate seriously.

The representative of Italy has made it clear that those of us in the delegations on whose behalf he was speaking approach this matter in an open and flexible manner. We have attempted to find some language that could be negotiated, that could be reasonable to all sides, that could offer the prospect for some serious discussion on the prevention of nuclear war and the other matters which are associated with it. My delegation is ready to move, and to hear counter-ideas; that is, unfortunately, after all, the phase in which the Committee finds itself at the moment. But also, as the representative of Italy said, it is very difficult to understand when we are attempting to adopt our agenda, why other matters cannot be continued.

We are prepared for serious discussion on this item and we will engage in it faithfully. But we expect others to be equally serious and equally faithful and not to create what appear to be linkages -- I hate to use the word but I am afraid it is the only word I can use. We are ready to move forward on all fronts (we will not even define how many there are) and we would appeal to others to do the same.

Mr. SADLEIR (Australia): Today I should like to address the most important of the outstanding new issues which have so far impeded agreement on our agenda. Mr. Chairman, a serious study on the prevention of nuclear war cannot be made in isolation. In 1980 the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a document entitled "Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons", put the question under very critical focus. The penultimate paragraph of that study states that "Peace requires the prevention of the danger of nuclear war". The final words of the report are as follows:

"The United Nations Charter and nuclear weapons date their existence from the same time. The future road should point to a full reliance on the Charter and to the elimination of all nuclear weapons."

These conclusions constitute a useful, widely accepted guideline for discussion on how to prevent nuclear war.

Before an item on preventing nuclear war was formally proposed for inclusion in our agenda, the Group of 21, in its important document CD/180, essentially endorsed the guideline I describe for the related work of our Committee. While we can all agree that nuclear war needs to be prevented, the Secretary-General's report makes the point that it is the danger of nuclear war which needs to be prevented. The danger lies in the breakdown of the international system which was created in the wake of, and has been built up since, the Second World War. That was a war which followed the breakdown of an international system. It was, moreover, a conventional war which ultimately brought about the use of nuclear weapons for the first and only time. Since then many scenarios have been written warning us of the possible outbreak of a third world war: almost all of those scenarios look at the lessons of history, the erosion of mutual trust and postulate an escalation up to the nuclear level.

As if to reinforce the warnings against nuclear war — and it is the only positive thing one can say on this — we have wars and armed clashes going on all the time. These are all conventional wars which, so far, have always been held in check. The danger that they might lead to something else must be prevented. I leave the last words in these general remarks of mine to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, who drove the point home repeatedly in this city, less than two weeks ago. He told questioners at his press conference:

"... international public opinion wants the two main nuclear countries to start discussing nuclear disarmament. But I insist no less on the necessity of discussing conventional disarmament. I think both problems have to be considered ..."

and again:

"I always want to relate together the nuclear arms race and the conventional arms race. It is very easy for some countries to use the nuclear arms race as a kind of smoke-screen in order to make us forget that there is the real and more immediate problem of the conventional arms race. At the same time we have to remember that conventional arms are becoming more and more sophisticated. I wonder whether they are not much more of a threat than nuclear arms ...".

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

At this session of the Committee, three new agenda items have been proposed for addition to our agreed 1982 agenda. The debate on such additions to the agenda has held up our doing any substantive work at all in a year which, by common consent, is a crucial one for disarmament. Western delegations, not least the Australian delegation, are distressed at this check on even a start being made on some of our key agenda items. We acknowledge the importance of the main proposed addition and have put forward several ideas so that it might be included in the agenda. We ask something very reasonable: that the formula eventually agreed on reflect the essence of what I have had to say in the first part of this statement. In fact, I believe that this essence is common ground for all delegations, that on substance there is no reason why we cannot reach agreement. Words can surely be found to cope with the different perspectives and nuances: if it is more convenient to manage this as a package for other proposed additions to the agenda, then so be it. My delegation is ready to co-operate in the task, which I repeat should not be a difficult one and should not delay us from reaching fair, mutual agreement on our agenda. In the meantime we should, I seriously propose, respond positively to the proposal formally made today by the Ambassador of Italy, that the Committee start work on questions where no disagreement exists.

Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) (translated from French): The French delegation deplores the impasse we have reached on the question of the agenda and the consequent holding up of all our work on questions of substance. New items were proposed for our agenda: it was obvious that they would give rise to objections; the wise thing would have been to adopt the old items, about which there was no problem, to settle the question of the chairmen of the working groups and to re-establish the latter without delay. We could at the same time have continued more easily to discuss new proposals concerning the agenda.

As it is, we find that our Committee has today lost more than two weeks' actual working time — for in past years we have adopted the agenda and programme of work during the second week of the session.

It is essential now to find a way out of the impasse. We shall do so if we return to the basic principle which should inspire all the work of a negotiating body and seek a solution acceptable to all. In the present case the two sides of the debate are clear: some of us want an item on the prevention of nuclear war; others are perfectly prepared to agree to this form of wording appearing in our agenda, even though this is a subject which, at least in my delegation's view, is not strictly a matter of disarmament and is not within the competence of our Committee unless its mandate is interpreted very broadly. These same delegations, however, maintain that the issue in question — the prevention of nuclear war — cannot be dissociated from another issue, that of the prevention of war in general and the prevention of conventional war. We must therefore reach agreement on a formulation which will cover all these ideas which are all valid in that they touch upon the fundamental bases of security — that undiminished security which is the very foundation for any progress in the matter of disarmament.

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

The French delegation for its part is prepared to participate fully in a discussion of substance on the prevention of nuclear war, provided that that discussion covers also the prevention of war in general and the prevention of conventional war.

In truth, the causes which in any part of the world could lead to a nuclear war are the same as those which would lead to war in general. The prevention of nuclear war cannot be separated from the prevention of war in general.

There is thus no reason for excluding one of these notions from the formulation adopted for the agenda. If we exclude the idea of war in general -- that of non-nuclear war -- we thereby indicate that we consider that to be an objective which does not merit our priority attention, whereas it is in fact of prime importance and is precisely what will help prevent nuclear war, the outbreak of which could result from conventional war.

During our discussions some delegations have maintained that the wording originally proposed -- the prevention of nuclear war -- covered the questions connected with the prevention of war in general. If that is the case, why not say so explicitly?

No one can deny that the prevention of nuclear war does not depend on the prevention of war itself. In fact the discussions proposed should concentrate in the first place on the political conditions of security: respect for the Charter, and in particular respect for the sovereignty of States; the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States. The document circulated by the Group of 21 (CD/341) rightly mentions these conditions, which are essential to international security and thus to the prevention of war in general.

These discussions ought also to deal with the intrinsic conditions of security: the balances necessary to it, bearing in mind regional situations; and confidence-building measures. These matters are also relevant to the prevention of war in general.

As to questions relating specifically to the prevention of nuclear war itself, we have had certain proposals: the non-first-use of nuclear weapons, the draft convention on the prohibition of use, etc. We are ready to discuss these proposals, even though they are incompatible with the security needs in one region of the world, that is, to say, contrary to the very conditions required for the maintenance of peace. This means that these discussions cannot lead to agreed conclusions.

But the Committee could consider other matters, such as the contribution which the conduct and success of nuclear weapons negotiations could make to the strengthening of security and confidence. The Committee could give its views on confidence-building measures and on the precautions to be taken against accidents, both of which are matters within the responsibility of the States directly concerned. We in no way exclude the consideration of any concrete and practical measures which might be proposed.

Thus the French delegation is ready to agree to the inclusion in the agenda of a reference to the subject in question, but it could not accept a form of wording confined exclusively to the prevention of nuclear war and disregarding the global character of the problem of security and peace.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Comrade Chairman, today's plenary meeting of the Committee was convened especially in order that it might attempt to adopt a decision on the basic organizational matters and first and foremost on the question of the agenda for this session. The position of the socialist countries has been very clearly and precisely explained by the distinguished Ambassador Komives. I have taken the floor only in order to add some brief additional comments and also to refer to the statements made by some of the speakers who have preceded me.

Although the questions we are considering are called organizational, they are by their nature fundamentally questions of principle. On the settlement of these questions ultimately depends the entire future work of the Committee and whether the Committee's activity will be such as to meet the demands of the world community, the expectations of millions and millions of people, or whether it will fail to resolve the most vital issues of the day. Thus the crux of the matter is whether or not the Committee on Disarmament intends at its present session to consider the most urgent question affecting world politics -- the problem of the prevention of nuclear war -- or whether a certain group of States is going to continue to prevent that through its obstructive attitude.

I do not think that there is any need for me now to put forward the innumerable arguments in favour of the need to include this question in the agenda as a separate item and to set up an ad hoc working group to conduct concrete negotiations; the socialist countries and, as I understand it, the non-aligned and neutral States members of the Committee are firmly in favour of this. Many of my colleagues in the group of socialist countries and the group of non-aligned States have referred to the relevant documents of the United Nations General Assembly which have stressed the need for the speediest possible consideration of this question; I would only add to them a reference to resolution 37/78 I, "Prevention of nuclear war", in which the General Assembly expresses its conviction that "the prevention of nuclear war and the reduction of the risks of nuclear war are matters of the highest priority and of vital interest to all the peoples of the world". In that same resolution the General Assembly called upon the Committee on Disarmament "to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war". I should like to recall that 130 States voted for that resolution and furthermore -- and this is particularly important -- that not one State voted against it.

The Soviet delegation considers that the Committee on Disarmament would not be fulfilling its duty to the United Nations, to the peoples of the world, if certain delegations -- let us be frank about it, certain sabotaging delegations -- were to deprive it of the possibility of discussing this priority matter and taking the necessary practical decisions on it.

The representatives of Western countries who have spoken here have tried to minimize the importance of the problem of the prevention of nuclear war; some speakers have even gone so far as virtually to place on the same footing war waged with nuclear weapons and war waged with conventional types of armaments.

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have constantly advocated and still advocate the prevention of the use of all kinds of weapons. Their attitude has been most clearly reflected in such well-known documents as the draft world treaty

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

on the non-use of force in international relations and the proposal made by the socialist countries members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization to the States members of NATO concerning the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. But it is the question of the prevention of nuclear war, the outbreak of which could lead to the destruction of all civilization, that is the most urgent and pressing problem of all. And this problem ought to be included as a matter of priority in the agenda of our Committee.

A few words about the proposals which have been made at this meeting. Ambassador Alessi of Italy, the co-ordinator of the group of Western countries, suggested that we should adopt today all those items on the agenda "on which there is no disagreement", namely, items 1 to 7. His suggestion was supported by certain other speakers representing Western countries and in particular by the representative of Japan, Ambassador Imai, and the representative of Australia, Ambassador Sadleir. At first sight the proposal might appear to be constructive. We could indeed begin considering those questions on which there is no divergence of views and on which we can conduct concrete negotiations. But let us look at the draft agenda and consider the state of the negotiations on items 1 to 7.

The first item on the agenda is the question of a nuclear test ban. Well, the socialist countries are indeed ready to begin negotiations if artificial obstacles are not placed in the way of the fulfilment of at least two General Assembly resolutions, namely, resolution 37/72, which was adopted by 125 votes, and resolution 37/85, which was adopted by 115 votes, both of which urge the Committee to conduct negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, on the basis of an appropriate mandate, and to submit the draft of such a treaty to the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session. There are in fact delegations which believe that these resolutions do not exist and that what exists is a decision that the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban in 1982 should be automatically renewed for 1983. I have already referred to two resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations whose opinion is entirely different from that of these delegations, and for my part I would like to put the following question to them: where and in what document is there a decision stating that last year's mandate should be maintained this year?

Let us now look at the second item on the agenda. The same group of States which are now opposing the inclusion in the agenda of a separate item on the prevention of nuclear war have already, as you know, for five years -- from 1979 to 1983 -- prevented the conduct of negotiations on nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the nuclear arms race.

Now for the third item on the agenda -- effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. I think the best person to speak about this item would be Ambassador Ahmad of Pakistan who could give you the reasons for the complete absence of any progress, for the deadlock, in fact, in the negotiations on this question.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Let us go on to agenda item 4 -- the prohibition of chemical weapons. It might appear that it would be possible to resume without any delay the negotiations on this question which were successfully conducted last year and at the beginning of this year under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of Poland, Comrade Sujka. But here again difficulties have arisen because of the ultimatum issued to the delegations of the socialist States. Attempts have been made virtually to exclude the group of socialist countries from participation in the decisions on the chairmanships of the working groups. Furthermore, with respect to some working groups it has been proposed that the principle of rotation should be adopted, while with respect to others it has been suggested that we keep to the same distribution of posts of chairmen as in 1982. As a result of this approach the group of socialist countries could find itself entirely deprived of a post as chairman. As Comrade Komives, the Ambassador of Hungary, has again confirmed today, the position of the socialist countries is flexible: we are prepared to agree either to a system of rotation or to the maintenance of the distribution of posts of chairmen which was in force last year. But whatever the decision, it must apply to all the working groups. We are not proposing dishonest deals to anyone and we ourselves shall not agree to any. We shall not permit infringements of the interests of the socialist countries.

In the negotiations on the fifth item of the agenda -- new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons -- there is a deadlock. The activity of the Working Group under the guidance of Ambassador Wegener of the Federal Republic of Germany, in spite of his energy and dynamism, is paralysed because of irreconcilable contradictions between the positions of certain participants.

Item 6 -- comprehensive programme of disarmament. All delegations were in favour of the re-establishment of the Working Group under the leadership of Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico, and it has begun its work.

And lastly, there is agenda item 7, the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The majority of delegations are truly ready, as they have been in the past, to undertake practical negotiations on this question, but last year one delegation prevented the adoption of a decision to set up a working group on it. If the position of that delegation has changed, we can only welcome the fact.

In view of the actual situation which exists as regards the course of the negotiations on items 1 to 7, I think that we ought first of all to agree on the agenda and programme of work, which would itself create a favourable basis for the consideration of the substance of issues. Consultations on other organizational matters could, I believe, go on at the same time. In fact I think that the Chairman of the Committee has been conducting such consultations.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that the group of socialist countries will not cause any difficulties as regards finding mutually acceptable solutions. We therefore call upon all delegations to adopt a constructive attitude, not in words but in deeds. Everyone is perfectly well aware of the reason for the lack of progress in our work. Let us try to solve these problems for the sake of our work, so that we may begin as soon as possible concrete negotiations on the questions of the limitation of the arms race and disarmament, which are the tasks of the Committee on Disarmament.

Mr. KONIK (Poland): Let me join the other distinguished speakers in this interesting exchange of views. I shall be very brief.

The distinguished Ambassador Komives has already expressed on behalf of the group of socialist countries their views on the most important organizational matters of this Committee at the beginning of its 1983 session. Also, Ambassador Issraelyan has just, with great eloquence, pronounced himself in fact on those matters. The Polish delegation fully shares these views. Indeed, we are disappointed and concerned by the fact that although one month of this session is already over, we have not managed even to adopt the agenda and the programme of work. Without repeating what has already been said today on this subject, I would like only to state that the attempts to impose on or dictate to the delegations of the group of socialist countries someone's approach or ready-made solutions on organizational matters cannot but impede, if not make impossible, finding adequate, agreed solutions. My delegation considers such attempts incompatible with generally accepted practices in the international negotiating forums, including this Committee.

The Polish delegation is of the opinion that the chairmanships of the working groups should be agreed on in a spirit of understanding between all regional groups and all interested delegations. In the prevailing circumstances we could concentrate our efforts on those working groups which promise to yield tangible results at the earliest possible time.

Furthermore, my delegation wishes to reiterate its position that the agenda of the 1983 session would be incomplete if the item concerning the prevention of nuclear war were not included. We realize that the refusal of certain delegations to include three additional items on the agenda, and particularly item 8, as mentioned above, is the main reason for the stagnation of this Committee's activities. We do hope that this stagnation is only a temporary phenomenon. For nobody should be misled: the overwhelming majority of the members of this Committee, all except a handful of delegations, would be ready to include, discuss and negotiate in a working group, as a separate item of the agenda, the problem of preventing nuclear war, in full accordance with the Committee's basic function and numerous resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, including fervent appeals made at its two special sessions devoted to disarmament.

My delegation will have the opportunity to speak in the near future specifically and in greater detail on the item "Prevention of nuclear war". I wish, however, to emphasize already this afternoon that the geographical position of my country in Europe gives my delegation a special authorization to speak out and in very clear terms about the nuclear danger and on ways and means of averting it. To include such an item on the agenda of this forum of multilateral disarmament negotiations is for my delegation, the delegation of a non-nuclear-weapon State, a question of principle.

In concluding these remarks I would like to thank you very much, Comrade Chairman, for your untiring efforts in trying to make this Committee agree on its agenda and programme of work. Let me state that my delegation has fully appreciated all your endeavours leading to the earliest resumption by the Committee on Disarmament of its full-scale activities. I am convinced that you, both as the Chairman of the Committee in the month of February, and as a member of the group of socialist countries, have made an enormous effort which will bear fruits in the very near future.

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): My delegation fully subscribes to what was said by our co-ordinator, Ambassador Komives of Hungary, about our assessment of the results of our deliberations on organizational matters and about the reasons which, in our view, have led to the unpleasant situation in the Committee. We regret deeply that we have been unable up to now to agree even on an agenda for our work.

The course of our debate during the past four weeks on the agenda and on other organizational matters reflects the present complicated international situation. The overwhelming majority of States members of the Committee on Disarmament have expressed their concern over the prevailing international conditions and called for urgent measures to make 1983 the decisive year in the struggle for disarmament. In close connection with this, Warsaw Treaty member States submitted in their recent Prague Declaration a realistic programme aiming at the solution of the most burning international issues of war and peace. Submitting concrete proposals, my country has underlined its readiness to contribute to the implementation of this programme.

Guided by these considerations, my delegation actively supported the proposal of the Group of 21 to include an item, "Prevention of nuclear war", in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament and to set up a corresponding working group.

It is high time that this Committee, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum started in an organized manner the serious consideration of measures to prevent nuclear war. This would be in line with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament where all States members of the Committee subscribed to the principle that all States, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, should consider various proposals to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war. This important commitment was underlined by many States at the second special session on disarmament and at the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. The German Democratic Republic, to mention one example, introduced resolution 37/78 J on the non-first-use of nuclear weapons and co-sponsored resolution 37/78 I which requested the Committee to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

It is a matter of deep concern, however, that in clear contradiction to the above-mentioned documents, especially the Final Document of the first special session, consensus on an item on the prevention of nuclear war has been blocked by some Western States. Considering this approach, it is very difficult for us to believe in the declarations made before the Committee some time ago by high-ranking politicians coming from those countries. After all, if nuclear war is recognized by all sides as the most dangerous threat to the survival of mankind, why should measures to avert it not be discussed in this Committee on a priority basis?

My delegation will also in future support all initiatives aimed at giving the Committee on Disarmament a negotiating role in this respect. We will carefully explore all compromise proposals to achieve this end.

(Mr. Herder, German Democratic Republic)

In my statement on 8 February as well as in document CD/344 our reasons for the proposal to include the prohibition of the nuclear neutron weapon as a separate item in the agenda were explained in detail. In a spirit of accommodation and flexibility, my delegation has declared its readiness to agree to a solution within the framework of agenda item 2. Likewise, we have declared our willingness to support consideration of ensuring the safe development of nuclear energy (proposed agenda item 10) in connection with item 5.

In our recent debate the Committee was asked to link the prevention of nuclear and conventional war. Within the framework of the Committee's decalogue there are certainly possibilities to consider the subject of conventional war in depth. Several delegations referred to the proposal by the Warsaw Treaty member States, contained in their Prague Declaration of 5 January 1983, on the conclusion of a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. They emphasized that it merits serious examination. Consequently, nothing would stand in the way of considering it in the Committee in a suitable framework. But at the same time we do not see any benefit in diluting such a priority problem like the Prevention of Nuclear War with the problem of the prevention of war in general. The question also arises, in our view, what would be the use of an agenda -- of an annotated agenda -- which simply leaves out the crucial issue of the prevention of nuclear war. Would we simply leave it aside and go on and do business as usual? If the agenda of this multilateral negotiating body is to be meaningful, it has to provide a clear possibility to negotiate on such a priority item as measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

In conclusion, Comrade Chairman, allow me to express also my delegation's great appreciation for your energetic and purposeful efforts to organize our Committee's work under these difficult conditions. We join the appeal addressed to all delegations to demonstrate political will and to act in a spirit of compromise in order to advance our Committee's work during the next month.

Mr. DON NANJIRA (Kenya): Ambassador Wabuge has already left for the seventh summit meeting of the non-aligned countries in New Delhi on whose agenda the issue of disarmament and in particular the prevention of nuclear war figure prominently. Let me assure you of this, Mr. Chairman, that document CD/341 on the prevention of nuclear war is right now on the table of the summit meeting.

On this last day of the first month of the first part of the session of the Committee on Disarmament under your chairmanship, permit me to say a few words in my capacity as co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for February and as a member of the Kenya delegation.

The Group of 21, both collectively and by individual delegations, as well as the other delegations which have spoken in support of the inclusion on the Committee's agenda of the prevention of nuclear war as a separate item, with a working group and appropriate mandate, have given reasons for such inclusion to which my delegation fully subscribes. The prevention of nuclear war is an item accorded the highest priority in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which is the guiding document of this Committee. All the

(Mr. Don Nanjira, Kenya)

countries represented herein have accepted, without any reservation whatsoever, the simple fact that not only do nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization itself, but indeed that the danger of war involving nuclear weapons must be averted, and that in this undertaking the nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility.

Secondly, the question of the prevention of nuclear war has not at all sprung up full-blown merely during this month or this session of the Committee on Disarmament. The majority of the international community, including those which form the Group of 21, have wanted and indeed insisted that the world community gives serious, earnest, urgent and substantive discussion to the subject of the prevention of nuclear war. Only a few States, most regrettably, have not been willing to engage in such negotiations but have instead wanted to merely debate this most urgent and pressing issue in terms of generalities. Obviously, all negotiations must take into consideration the vital security interests of all parties concerned. Problems arise, however, when and where one party may be willing to present its case or position exhaustively whereas the other party is not willing to do so. In such a circumstance, progress in negotiations is bound to slow down and even to be lacking. We need to overcome this problem in the Committee, especially on the question of the prevention of nuclear war.

Thirdly, the Group of 21, following the failure of the second special session on disarmament and bearing in mind the rapidly and continuously deteriorating international political situation, have very rightly and properly decided that it is high time -- that indeed time is long overdue -- that the Committee give the issue of the prevention of nuclear war the treatment and the eminent place it deserves and should occupy on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament. Furthermore, the prevention of nuclear war would undoubtedly obviate the total and absolute destruction of mankind. Hence the talk about nuclear war, the danger of which is posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use in war, is of great and grave concern to all, and I underscore the word all, and not just to the nuclear-weapon States alone. The very fact that everybody and every nation would be erased from the face of the earth means that the existence of nuclear weapons has a close bearing on the vital security interests of all nations and their peoples. This in turn necessitates recognition by all of the existence of a process of collective security in which all States, nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon, belligerent and non-belligerent alike, have a duty and corresponding right to participate in and contribute to the process of disarmament. This is why the Group of 21, in their customary objective, impartial and serious approach to the work of the Committee on Disarmament, have submitted at this session of the Committee on Disarmament a most balanced and precise working paper contained in document CD/341, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war". It is not merely a question of principle. It is a question of survival or annihilation. Document CD/341 offers, under the circumstances, the best approach to, and treatment of, the issue within this Committee. We have repeatedly asked for constructive views on our proposal. One group within this Committee still owes us an exhaustive reaction to the Group of 21's proposal. Unfortunately, it is still unclear to the majority of us where that group stands on the issue. Clearly, mere reiterations of a past position which has been rejected by the majority of the Committee's members will not help in the narrowing of the differences. We would like to know whether there are any truly alternative proposals which we can discuss.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, and this is noteworthy, many delegations, including

(Mr. Don Nanjira, Kenya)

respective Governments, as they have repeatedly stated, not to accept or adopt an agenda for the Committee in 1983 which will not, at least in one way or another, include, expressis verbis, prevention of nuclear war as an identifiable item and with a separate working group and suitable mandate to deal with this most urgent issue before mankind today. As for the other items for discussion by the Committee, including the chairmanships of and appropriate mandates for working groups, the position of the Group of 21 has already been articulated in this Committee many times. I will not, therefore, discuss them in my current intervention. We have a duty to prevent confrontation here as elsewhere. We have a duty to implement the provisions of the United Nations Charter, and of the numerous decisions and resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as of the Final Document of the first special session. We have a duty to negotiate within this Committee in good faith and with the necessary commitment and determination to achieve the over-all objective enshrined in the Final Document. If we all have this as our ultimate goal, and we are serious about it, then we should accept the argument that the prevention of nuclear war will facilitate and lead to nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the nuclear arms race, as well as conventional disarmament on a world-wide scale. And hence the need to accord an identifiable and separate status to the issue of the prevention of nuclear war.

I hope that agreement can be reached soon on this critical and fundamental issue. For our part we in the Group of 21 have shown considerable flexibility and we regret very much that despite our willingness to discuss the issue substantively, some delegations here have not been forthcoming, with the result that some conclusions are already being drawn: anybody who prevents the Committee from discussing the prevention of nuclear war is for nuclear war! If this is true, then we want to be told in unambiguous terms.

Mr. Chairman, I would be failing in my duty as co-ordinator of the Group of 21 for this month if I did not express our genuine thanks to you for the leadership you have provided to the Committee in the course of this month. Yours has been an impossible job, but nevertheless you have done it with great patience, dedication and coherence, and we appreciate this very much.

Finally, Sir, but not least, permit me to express the deep and sincere gratitude of the Kenya delegation to the Group of 21 for the co-operation and total trust which they have placed in my delegation while we have served as Chairman of the Group.

Mr. OUL-ROUIS (Algeria) (translated from French): My delegation associates itself with other delegations which have taken the floor in order to deplore the lack of progress in our work which rightly led you to convene this meeting to consider organizational matters for the session. I should like at once to say that the Algerian delegation has no difficulty in agreeing to the agenda as it is set forth in Working Paper No. 79, which contains three new items.

Without wishing to take sides in the controversy on the nature of neutron weapons, the Algerian delegation has no objection to the inclusion of the question of the prohibition of such weapons in our agenda because it is its principle to support any proposal for multilateral negotiations on nuclear weapons.

As regards the proposed item 10, again my delegation has no basic objection to the inclusion in the agenda of an item on ensuring the safe development of nuclear energy although it would like to know more about the reasons promoting this

(Mr. Oul-Rouis, Algeria)

I should, however, like to make some comments on the item on the prevention of nuclear war which is listed as item 8 in the draft agenda.

Everyone today agrees on the existence of the danger of a nuclear war and the need to avert the risk of a nuclear holocaust.

Unfortunately, this dual recognition has not yet made it possible to begin the negotiation of appropriate measures to avert, if not eliminate, the danger of nuclear war.

Almost five years ago the General Assembly, meeting in its first special session devoted to disarmament, stressed the danger of nuclear war and urged the need to take measures to prevent it. The desire of the international community to avert the risk of a nuclear war was reflected in particular in the high priority attached to the prevention of nuclear war in the Programme of Action adopted at that time.

Thus the elimination of the danger of nuclear war was considered as the immediate goal, the most urgent and pressing task. All States, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, were invited to consider various proposals designed to ensure the non-resort to nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war.

If the prevention of nuclear war was considered, rightly moreover, an urgent task in 1978, we ought all to agree that its urgency is even greater today.

It is in fact undeniable that certain factors which have appeared since the adoption of the Final Document in 1978 combine to reduce still further the distance between the possibility of the outbreak of a nuclear war and its actual occurrence.

There is first of all, of course, the acceleration of the nuclear arms race which, fostered by the continuous contribution of scientific innovations, has undergone a significant qualitative development in recent years as a result of achievements in the realm of miniaturization.

There is, secondly, the dangerous development of nuclear strategies based on the illusion of the possibility of waging a limited nuclear war.

There is, too, the deterioration in the international political climate brought about by the suspicion inherent in a system of security based on the threat of reciprocal destruction and the logic of perpetual efforts to gain military superiority.

These factors, among others, combine to increase the risk of nuclear war by lowering still further the nuclear threshold and at the same time increasing the temptation to resort to nuclear weapons. It is thus more urgent than ever to seek together to find ways of reducing the threat of nuclear war.

It is on the basis of this imperative need that the Group of 21, of which my delegation is a member, proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament for 1983 of an item on the prevention of nuclear war and the setting up of an ad hoc working group to undertake negotiations on appropriate and practical measures with a view to the prevention of a nuclear war.

In stressing the urgency of the need to negotiate measures for the prevention of nuclear war my delegation has no intention whatever of legitimizing war conducted by conventional means. Indeed, if there is a geographical area where conventional warfare has caused ravages since the end of the Second World War it is certainly that

(Mr. Oul-Rouis, Algeria)

It is simply a matter of a priority which seemed obvious to us and which is based primarily on the difference in kind between nuclear war and conventional war.

Because of its devastating consequences and the threat it constitutes to the very survival of mankind, nuclear war cannot be compared with conventional war.

Furthermore, we are convinced that any attempt to place the prevention of nuclear war in the much broader framework of the prevention of war in general and the non-resort to force, apart from being dangerous because it confuses nuclear weapons and conventional weapons, at the same time constitutes a dilution of the principles and priorities set forth in the 1978 Programme of Action. Need I remind you that the only positive result of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was precisely an undertaking by all States to respect those priorities?

As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Committee on Disarmament is indisputably the place for the conduct of negotiations on the prevention of nuclear war.

The prevention of nuclear war is in fact eminently a multilateral issue. The nuclear-weapon States certainly have a special responsibility in the adoption of measures designed to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war. However, this responsibility cannot be exclusive, for the prevention of war does not concern the security of those States alone. Because of its devastating effects for belligerents and non-belligerents alike, nuclear war threatens the very survival of mankind. Thus each State has both the duty and the right to participate in the negotiations on the prevention of nuclear war.

In his statement to the Committee on Disarmament of 15 February, the United Nations Secretary-General stressed the role which the Committee on Disarmament should play in the prevention of nuclear war when he said: "I see no other body at present where a balanced and representative membership may engage in a thorough discussion of that most important question".

In including the question of the prevention of nuclear war in its agenda, the Committee on Disarmament would be implementing resolutions 37/78 I adopted by the General Assembly at its last session by 130 votes in favour and none against, in which it requested the Committee on Disarmament to undertake, as a matter of the highest priority, negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

This sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body would at the same time be responding to the demands of our peoples and helping to reduce the fear of a nuclear holocaust.

We are convinced that the total elimination of the danger of nuclear war is linked with nuclear disarmament. But does that mean that we must wait until nuclear disarmament, which of course we want with all our hearts, has taken place? Certainly not. It is our duty as members of the Committee on Disarmament and morally collectively responsible to the entire international community to deal with the question of the prevention of nuclear war in a manner commensurate with its urgency and high priority.

Mr. WEGENER (Federal Republic of Germany): The position of my delegation has been most eloquently reflected in the statement read out earlier by the distinguished Ambassador of Italy. In the first place, my delegation fully supports his proposal to start work where we can start. It has been pointed out to us that all our agenda points, even those on which there is no immediate controversy, are beset with difficulties — one more reason, Mr. Chairman, to decide swiftly to commence work on these items and to devote our full energy to the solution of the problems which have been so vividly described.

Secondly, in the statement by the Italian Ambassador, I found an immense constructive spirit concerning the proposed agenda item on the prevention of nuclear war. Flexibility and a constructive approach — these are qualities which my delegation also attempted to bring to bear on this subject which it has very much at heart; and I hope that we have proved this on earlier occasions which I do not wish to recall in every detail.

If I strip the statements which I have heard this afternoon of some gratuitous polemics, some all too obvious tactical manoeuvring and even some misrepresentations of fact, I am still gratified — gratified about the exceptionally broad support which the topic of the prevention of war has found among us. There is no delegation which is against an agenda item or part of an agenda item reflecting the need to prevent nuclear war; for some, in its pure form prevention of nuclear war, for some with an added element emphasizing the context. But what we should now stress is that all delegations agree, for the first time, that the prevention of war is an important subject which should be dealt with by the Committee on Disarmament, and that is an important and meaningful step. We also have, beyond the difficulties in detail, an agreement on a large degree of substance and I hope that the heat of battle does not becloud this partial, positive result. It is the belief of my delegation that there is now potential for a consensus that goes even wider. If we have not come to see that potential fully, there are some regrets which I have to voice. In the first place, our debate has been too ritual; it could have been more fertile in terms. And secondly, we have probably not found the appropriate format for working out consensus formulations, in a spirit of community of purpose. My delegation would therefore like to call for a new effort, in the appropriate format, for some intensive drafting work on a formula which could win our joint support. The urgency of the topic calls for an early commencement of substantive work in this area as in others, beyond the semantic niceties of this or that labelling.

In earlier statements, in various forums, my delegation has pointed to two conditions which should be met when we formulate an agenda item on the prevention of nuclear war. Firstly, the broader context of war prevention must not be lost. I want to say in earnest that this does not in the slightest degree mean the down-scaling of the significance of the prevention of nuclear war. It is, rather, stressing the necessary interdependence with other forms of armed conflict. The distinguished delegate of India only a short time ago reminded us that "Nuclear war is not less terrifying because conventional wars are also terrifying." Both are, and both have therefore to be prevented.

The formula designed to stress and to bring out this context which was proposed by the Italian delegation a few days ago and to which my delegation has subscribed, appears suitable. But I would make it quite clear that other formulas

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

might be equally suitable and that we are ready to explore them. The second condition which my delegation saw at a certain point was that we should have some clearer grasp of the scope of the work under an item on the prevention of nuclear war. We believe that the largest prospect for progress and an eventual consensus outcome would lie beneath the doctrinal level, and this is why we thought there was a great appeal in the formula "appropriate and practical measures". Certainly, we would also be prepared to debate the subject in all its broader aspects. A long list of topics comes to mind which could be discussed under this item. Some were contained in a paper in which my delegation submitted at the second special session jointly with two other delegations. The list is in fact longer. We find that it is possible to propose an integrated package of measures that would make war less likely. I anticipate that my delegation will make an early contribution to the organization of our work on a future item on war prevention. We are prepared to provide a conceptual input, once a working format has evolved, a working format which, in the first stage, would have to be of an appropriately informal character.

Mr. CARASALES (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): In recent weeks this Committee has held many informal meetings to discuss the adoption of its agenda for this session and in particular the inclusion in the agenda of a separate item entitled "Prevention of nuclear war", as proposed by the Group of 21.

The Argentine delegation has already made known its views on a number of occasions but since the Committee is today holding a formal meeting on the subject I consider it necessary, even at the risk of repetition, to set forth, albeit briefly, the reasoning underlying its attitude in this matter, and I am referring particularly to the prevention of nuclear war.

As I have said more than once, and it is a simple matter of fact, a new epoch in the history of mankind opened in 1945 with the inauguration of the nuclear era and the explosion of the first atomic bomb. From the very beginning this fact has justifiably aroused the concern of the entire international community, a concern which has become greater with the passage of time as nuclear arsenals have constantly grown in numbers, power and sophistication. We have all been aware in recent years, either directly or through reports, of the huge demonstrations whose main theme — I think it is not too much to say — has been a preoccupation with the possibility of the outbreak of a nuclear war. I believe that that is the case and that world public opinion has been mobilized as never before in history by this specific preoccupation: the possibility of the outbreak of nuclear war, and that this concern is growing in all sectors of the international community and in all parts of the world.

At the time of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament this concern was certainly not unknown, and if we look quickly

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

through the most important product of that first special session, namely, the Final Document, we see that concern for the danger of a nuclear war and the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons permeates the entire text of the document. There is no need for me to quote any particular paragraphs: a mere reading of the document is enough to show that this theme is regarded in the Final Document as the matter of the most urgent priority, and that in certain paragraphs it specifically mentions the need to adopt all possible measures, as a matter of priority, in order to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war.

The years passed and in 1981 the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/81 B, in which it urged all States Members of the United Nations, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to submit for consideration at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament their views, proposals and practical suggestions for ensuring the prevention of nuclear war. I should like to recall in passing, as evidence of the interest my country has taken in this question, that it was the Argentine delegation which had the honour of submitting, on behalf of all its sponsors, the draft resolution which subsequently became resolution 36/81 B, a resolution which, moreover, as has already been mentioned today, was adopted by consensus.

Everyone will remember that the subject of the prevention of nuclear war was one of the few items which were discussed with some degree of thoroughness at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and this is to some extent reflected in the very modest document which emerged from that international meeting. But as you all know, no agreement was reached, and it was for that reason that the General Assembly at its last session adopted resolution 37/78 I, the text of which I shall not quote because it is only too well known. The Argentine delegation again had the honour of presenting the draft of this resolution on behalf of its sponsors, a draft which, as has also been mentioned, received the favourable votes of 130 States Members of the United Nations and the contrary votes of none.

It was with a view to carrying out the recommendation made in that resolution that the Group of 21 submitted the document now before the Committee, namely, document CD/341. My delegation, as a member of the Group of 21, collaborated in the drafting of that document and subscribes entirely to all its paragraphs. This document proposes the inclusion of a special item in our agenda and the setting up of a working group to conduct negotiations in this connection. It is on this proposal that the greater part of the disagreements and consultations of these last weeks have concentrated. The principal, if not the only objection which has been voiced in connection with this proposal of the Group of 21 is that this subject cannot be considered in isolation. It is hardly necessary to say that this is perfectly true, not only of the prevention of nuclear war but also of all the other items on our Committee's agenda. Can we talk about nuclear disarmament or the cessation of the nuclear arms race in isolation? — about chemical weapons in isolation? — about radiological weapons in isolation? — about the prevention of an arms race in outer space in isolation? Certainly not, but this has not made it impossible to put specific items on these questions on our agenda.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

It has been argued that nuclear war cannot be considered separately from the prevention of war in general — of all wars — and from questions of the maintenance of peace. If this line of reasoning were adopted, it would make the task of the Committee on Disarmament as broad as that of the United Nations General Assembly itself. But no one has said, at least as far as my delegation has heard, that the Committee on Disarmament is not competent to deal with the specific subject of the prevention of nuclear war. No one has said that the subject is not important. Until this afternoon, no one declared that he did not know exactly what was meant by the prevention of nuclear war or that any questions needed to be answered before a decision could be taken on whether or not the item should be included in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament.

I should like to repeat that what the world community is concerned about is precisely nuclear war. The outbreak of nuclear war would mean the annihilation of life on this planet, a holocaust which would threaten the very survival of the human race on earth, and it is for this very simple and clear reason that the international community and all the peoples of the world are concerned specifically about the possibility of a nuclear war. Thus it seems to my delegation that this is a sufficiently important matter to merit separate treatment on the part of the Committee on Disarmament. My delegation admits, of course, that there could be many different ideas as to the measures to be adopted to prevent a nuclear war. But what we cannot understand is why this item cannot be dealt with as such by the Committee on Disarmament but must be discussed in a context so general and so vast that, in my delegation's view, there would be very few chances of our reaching concrete and positive conclusions about what truly preoccupies humanity, namely, nuclear war. I believe that this opposition from certain quarters to a specific discussion of this item stems from the same line of reasoning as has made it impossible for the Committee on Disarmament to conduct negotiations — real and meaningful negotiations — on other items of the agenda such as item 1, Nuclear test ban, item 2, Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and the item on negative security assurances. It is clear that wherever the nuclear element comes into play, the activity of this Committee becomes deadlocked, and it would appear that this applies also to the subject of the prevention of nuclear war, with the difference, in this case, that it is proving impossible even to include it on the agenda of our Committee.

It has been said this afternoon that the differences of opinion are perhaps more apparent than real and that there is a good basis, a substratum of common views, which could make it possible to reach agreement on this matter. Certainly, my delegation has no objection to — on the contrary, it is entirely in favour of — the continuation of the efforts to find a formula which would make it possible for the Committee to deal with this important question. But this formula must be one which will allow the subject of the prevention of nuclear war to retain all its individuality and to be dealt with separately. If, in the end, the Committee on Disarmament refuses to include this item on its agenda, and consequently to deal with it, this will be something very difficult to explain to international public opinion. What I have been trying to make clear in this statement is that my delegation, like many others, will not consider itself responsible for such an abnormal situation.

Mr. LI (China): During the Chairman's consultations and at the informal meetings the Chinese delegation has already expressed its views concerning the adoption of the agenda. We, like many other delegations, regret that no agreement has been reached so far on the agenda in this Committee. I would now like to make once again a brief comment on this problem.

At present, the main controversy concerning the adoption of the agenda is whether the "Prevention of nuclear war" should be included. The prevention of nuclear war is indeed an important question and a major concern of many countries. We are in favour of including it in the agenda, either as a separate item or to be discussed under item 2 of the draft agenda, i.e. the "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". This is because we always hold that in order to reduce and eliminate the danger of nuclear war it is essential to halt the nuclear arms race and carry out nuclear disarmament, and first of all substantially to reduce the two major nuclear arsenals. It is, therefore, feasible to discuss it under item 2 if no agreement can be reached on its inclusion as a separate item in the agenda.

Some countries argue that the wording "the prevention of war, both nuclear and conventional" should be added to item 2. It is our consistent view that the prevention of conventional war is a real and important issue. However, since there has been a preliminary exploration of it by the United Nations Disarmament Commission and since the Expert Group on Conventional Disarmament is to submit a report on this issue, it is advisable that our Committee arrange a specific discussion on this subject at an appropriate time in the future. Therefore, it is not necessary to add those words to item 2. As a matter of fact, since there is a link between nuclear war and conventional war, naturally countries can always express their views on the prevention of war, including conventional war, even if there is no such wording in item 2. We have stressed time and again that in order to prevent a war, including a nuclear war, it is essential, apart from disarmament, to oppose all acts violating the basic principles of the United Nations Charter.

As for the question of "Prohibition of the nuclear neutron weapon" (the ninth item, in brackets, in the draft agenda), we have always held that this kind of weapon falls into the category of nuclear weapons. It is, therefore, not necessary to include it as a separate item. It can also be discussed under item 2.

As for "Ensuring the safe development of nuclear energy" (the tenth item, in brackets, in the draft agenda), we as well as some other countries hold that it can be discussed under item 5, i.e. "the prohibition of radiological weapons". It is not necessary to include it as a separate item either.

In the past few years, the Committee on Disarmament has been unable to play its role in promoting the process of disarmament. We do not think that the reason for this is that there are not enough subjects on the agenda. On the contrary, there have been quite a lot of subjects on the agenda. The problem is that no substantial progress has been made on any of the subjects. Therefore, what we should do now is not to add still more new subjects to the agenda but to settle the agenda problem as early as possible so as to leave more time for the discussion and settlement of substantive issues.

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, at the last meeting of the Committee on Disarmament, I made the second statement (I think that the first was made by the distinguished representative of India) at a plenary meeting -- those of which verbatim records are made -- on the question put forward by the Group of 21 in its working paper CD/241

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

I am very glad that at today's plenary meeting there have been so many speakers on this subject, for it seems to me that it is one about which all the peoples have the right to know what to expect. As the old Latin saying has it, verba volant scripta manent.

At today's meeting I should like to begin by referring to a matter which some may consider unimportant but which I do not see in that light. The distinguished representative of Australia read us a passage from a press interview given by the Secretary-General on the same day on which, in the morning, he had visited this Committee and made a statement which is reproduced in the verbatim record of the 194th plenary meeting. I do not think it is fair to the Secretary-General to cite as the expression of his position something he may have said impromptu at a press conference, for as we all know such remarks do not always accurately reflect what we might have wished to say. If that were indeed the position of the Secretary-General, I should feel obliged, much to my regret and despite the high esteem in which I hold him, to say that that was a position incompatible with the philosophy of the United Nations in the matter of disarmament.

In order to prove this it would be enough to read the paragraphs of the Final Document which I mentioned the other day, paragraphs 8, 18, 20, 45 and 47, which I am certainly not going to read again today. I would only add to those, as a useful complement, that the General Assembly in that same Final Document declared that it was "Alarmed by the threat to the very survival of mankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the continuing arms race". The second paragraph I should like to quote today in addition to those I quoted last time is paragraph 11 of the Final Document which states:

"Mankind today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced. Existing arsenals of nuclear weapons alone are more than sufficient to destroy all life on earth."

To these quotations from the Final Document might usefully be added, in order to illustrate what I have called the philosophy of the United Nations with respect to disarmament, some paragraphs of the "Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons", which was circulated as a report of the Secretary-General on 12 September 1980, in document A/35/392, and which is undoubtedly one of the reports about which the Secretary-General himself said recently: "the reports prepared by the United Nations are not based on political considerations. They should be considered as being technical in nature and as studies dealing with the substance of problems". So, then, from that report let us take some paragraphs at random. Paragraph 490, for example, which says that "nuclear weapons have now become a 'perpetual menace to human society', in [Niels] Bohr's words". Or paragraph 491, in which we read the following:

"Never before have States been in a position to destroy the very basis of the continued existence of other States or regions; never before has the destructive capacity of weapons been so immediate, complete and universal; never before has mankind been faced, as today, with the real danger of self-extinction."

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

Again, a little further on, paragraph 497 reads:

"Even if the balance of deterrence was an entirely stable phenomenon, there are strong moral and political arguments against a continued reliance on this balance. It is inadmissible that the prospect of the annihilation of human civilization is used by some States to promote their security. The future of mankind is then made hostage to the perceived security of a few nuclear-weapon States and most notably that of the two Superpowers."

Lastly, I should like to read from paragraph 519 which says:

"Even if the road to nuclear disarmament is a long and difficult one, there is no alternative. Peace requires the prevention of the danger of a nuclear war. If nuclear disarmament is to become a reality, the commitment to mutual deterrence through a balance of terror must be discarded. The concept of the maintenance of world peace, stability and balance through the process of deterrence is perhaps the most dangerous collective fallacy that exists."

I believe that these paragraphs which I have quoted from the Final Document and the Comprehensive study on nuclear weapons are enough to illustrate, to give a correct idea of, the philosophy of the United Nations in the matter of nuclear weapons. This is why I took the liberty of saying a few moments ago that if I believed the position of the Secretary-General on the subject of nuclear weapons to be indeed what appears to emerge from the quotation read out by the distinguished representative of Australia, I would have to consider it incompatible with that philosophy of the United Nations. Fortunately, there is a statement which is in my view much more authoritative as regards the position of the Secretary-General. What I am referring to in fact is not a hasty improvisation at a press conference but a paragraph from a speech that was carefully thought out and prepared by the Secretary-General, the speech he made to us here on 15 February and which is reproduced in the verbatim record of the Committee's 194th plenary meeting. I quoted it last time, and I shall quote it again today. Thus, the Secretary-General said the following:

"At its first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978, the United Nations General Assembly recognized that 'the removal of the threat of a world war -- a nuclear war -- is the most acute and urgent task of the present day'. Little, if any, progress has been achieved on this score, although the prevention of nuclear war covers a wide range of political and technical measures which require careful consideration by nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. Since it poses a threat to the survival of the human species, nuclear war is a matter of concern to all. I see no other body at present where a balanced and representative membership may engage in a thorough discussion of that most important question."

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

As to the discussion we have been listening to today, I have asked myself a number of times whether what we are doing now is considering the possibility of agreeing to the modest request of the Group of 21 which, after all, consists only of including in the agenda the item "Prevention of nuclear war", or whether we are already discussing the substance of the issue, for I cannot see any more neutral way of defining the item than that proposed by the Group of 21. Under this heading, "Prevention of nuclear war", each delegation can put forward whatever arguments it likes: one can say that the prevention of nuclear war is so important that it should be the subject of exhaustive examination on its own; another can say that in view of the interrelationship between all things human, it should be taken up together with many other factors. I myself the other day, using what is known as a reductio ad absurdum argument, showed that it could be maintained that in a discussion on the prevention of nuclear war, since nuclear war can only be waged by human beings, it would be legitimate to debate whether the story of Genesis or the theory of Darwin correctly explains the origin of man.

But I repeat, if we want to examine the question of the prevention of nuclear war in a way allowing complete freedom of discussion, we could find nothing better, no description more neutral than "Prevention of nuclear war". We were amazed to hear one of the distinguished representatives here, who has most adamantly opposed the inclusion of this item on our agenda, using a form of argument which, stripped of its trappings and adornments, amounts to the following: his delegation would have no objection to the inclusion in the agenda of an item on this question provided that it is worded in a manner that is to its liking, a manner which prejudices the question of substance beforehand and does so in such a way as totally to support the thesis of his delegation to the exclusion of all others. This is absurd.

My delegation has repeatedly shown the greatest flexibility, even though, I repeat, it is convinced that the best form of wording is "Prevention of nuclear war"-- the most adequate, the most neutral, the most favourable to complete freedom in the debate. Nevertheless, if the Committee wants to add this to another item, you, Mr. Chairman, can confirm that even before consulting the other members of the Group of 21, while explaining that I was speaking only for myself, I suggested it could be incorporated into item 2 by putting a semicolon and then adding, "Prevention of nuclear war". This suggestion apparently did not satisfy some delegations, any more than did the last compromise proposal that you, together with the representative of the Secretary-General and Secretary of the Committee, put before delegations for informal consideration, through the co-ordinators of the various groups.

In these circumstances I too should like to make a proposal, a formal proposal in the same way as the one put before us here today at the beginning of the discussion on behalf of a group of delegations. My formal proposal is that the Committee should amend its rules of procedure so as to permit the adoption of the agenda in a manner similar to that applying to the adoption of the

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

agenda of the Security Council. I do not believe that anyone can claim that our discussions here have more serious implications for the security of States than those which take place in the Security Council, which is the supreme body charged with responsibility for ensuring international security. If we follow this course, I am sure that we can adopt the agenda in five minutes.

Mr. NUNEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): At the plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament held on Tuesday, 22 February, the head of my delegation explained our views with regard to the prevention of nuclear war. I should however today like to clarify certain aspects of our position in the light of various statements we have heard.

In the first place we do not agree that the Committee has spent one month talking about procedural matters. Experience of the work of the Committee has shown that there is nothing strictly procedural in its activities and that there is always something substantial behind what might appear to be procedural. Behind the refusal to include an item on the prevention of nuclear war in our agenda there is, in our view, the desire not to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons, to secure military superiority and to negotiate from positions of strength. You only have to look at the attitude adopted by the same countries with regard to the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests or the cessation of the nuclear arms race to see that this is no mere matter of procedure.

I am not going to refer to all the paragraphs in the Final Document which declare the prevention of nuclear war to be the question of the highest priority at the present time. I will simply recall paragraph 8 of that document which states that, while the final objective of the efforts of all States should continue to be general and complete disarmament under effective international control, the immediate goal is that of the elimination of the danger of a nuclear war. That was what was said in 1978. Arsenals of nuclear weapons have increased since then both quantitatively and qualitatively and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and other doctrines all based on the use of nuclear weapons have become the cornerstone of the foreign policy of certain Western countries which have even shamelessly admitted this indirectly in this Committee. This group of countries now offers us a "compromise" formula which is in reality an alternative position to that of the Final Document of 1978. The Final Document was adopted by consensus and was also ratified by consensus only a few months ago. The only alternative language we understand in this connection is that of implementing the programme of action contained in the Final Document in a direct and straightforward manner and without resorting to delaying tactics in this Committee. Resolution 37/78 I, which was adopted by 130 votes in favour, none against and 17 abstentions, is very clear in its request to the Committee on Disarmament. The Group of 21 took the essentials of this resolution fully into account in submitting document CD/341.

(Mr. Nunez Mosquera, Cuba)

The document of the Group of 21 has been praised here today and it has even been said that it approaches the problem of international security in an objective manner. Why, then, is it not accepted? Furthermore, resolution 36/81 B entitled "Prevention of nuclear war" was adopted by consensus and no one then objected to the title of that resolution.

Unfortunately the situation is rather different in the Committee on Disarmament and the States which are preventing us making any headway in our work have shown that they do not take the international community or world public opinion very seriously.

In this same room, at the beginning of this month, the Vice-President of the United States said that the most dangerous view, particularly in the nuclear age, was that war is inevitable. Unfortunately, events in this Committee have shown that this danger is not taken very seriously either; on the contrary, it is exacerbated. We have heard references today to the blocking of the work of the Committee, and we cannot but agree with those views. Since 1979 this Committee has been prevented from undertaking serious negotiations on the highest priority items on its agenda. Who are doing the blocking? The same countries as have prevented the starting of our work in February of this year, and with the same arguments, that is, arguments which leave out of account the views of three-quarters of mankind. This month has shown which countries are determined not to allow any progress in the negotiations on disarmament, and it has also shown that not all members of this Committee respect the priorities for disarmament negotiations which in 1978 they appeared to be accepting by consensus. A reference was made here today to a statement of the Indian delegation and I, too, should like to quote what Ambassador Dubey said in this Committee only four days ago. It is the following:

"The same countries which insist that we must deal with nuclear and conventional war together have always in the past drawn a very clear-cut distinction between nuclear weapons and conventional weapons. Such a distinction was the basis of the philosophy of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The highest priority attached to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was also based on a common recognition that, unlike conventional weapons, nuclear weapons pose a threat to the very survival of mankind. What has led these States to change their position now? The Group of 21 wish to negotiate measures to ensure that the survival of their peoples and the survival of mankind are not endangered by any use of nuclear weapons. What has this in common with the prevention of wars using conventional weapons? The threat to survival cannot be equated to the death and destruction resulting from the use of conventional weapons."

There are still questions pending this month, including the future of this item, which, moreover, we do not think will be settled today.

We trust that the countries which are hindering the work of this Committee and which have this afternoon expressed regrets and hopes will reconsider their positions and respect the desire of mankind to survive.

Mr. DE LA GORCE (France) (translated from French): I hesitate to take the floor at this late hour but I should like to make a rectification. My delegation has been accused, in the course of the discussion here, of trying to minimize the importance of the prevention of nuclear war. I should like to make it clear that obviously I have said nothing that could justify such an accusation. How, indeed, could one cloak the importance of this subject? In addition, my delegation was perhaps also being referred to by certain speakers who declared that some members of the Committee were blocking or wanted to block consideration of an item on the prevention of nuclear war. I should like to say once again that I have heard no such thing. I have not heard a single statement which could be interpreted as a refusal to engage in such a discussion; on the contrary. As to my delegation, it is ready to consider very seriously the subject of the prevention of nuclear war, but it does not think that a serious consideration of this question is possible if it is dissociated from other matters which are by their nature indissolubly linked with it. And we believe that the wording of the item we are discussing should reflect this fact. I am referring, of course, to the item mentioning the prevention of nuclear war.

Mr. STEELE (Australia): My delegation has no wish to misrepresent the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We are confident that we have not done so. We said in our statement that the Secretary-General made the point reflected in our quotation more than once and did not give the full account. It would perhaps help delegations to look at it closely in the press release issued by the information service of the United Nations at Geneva, numbered SG/SM/475 and issued on 15 February 1983.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from Russian): My list of speakers is now exhausted. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If not, I should like to make a short statement.

The first month of the 1983 session of the Committee on Disarmament is coming to an end. What can be said about the results of the work of the Committee during this period?

The general debate in which members of the Committee have taken part has again convincingly shown the urgent importance of dealing with the problems of the cessation of the arms race and disarmament. Speakers have expressed great concern at the present state of affairs in this vitally important sphere and have urged the need to make the utmost efforts to resolve the most burning issues of the day -- the prevention of nuclear war, the curbing of the nuclear arms race, and nuclear disarmament. A number of new suggestions and proposals have been put forward which merit serious attention and business-like consideration. Delegations have rightly said that this year of 1983 is the most crucial for the solving of the most urgent problems of disarmament. In his statement to the Committee, the Secretary-General of the United Nations convincingly expressed the legitimate desire of the peoples of the world for peace, international détente and disarmament.

It is no accident, therefore, that the attention of the world is riveted upon the work of this multilateral negotiating forum, for the international community expects the Committee to resolve the problems before it as speedily and urgently as possible.

(The Chairman)

According to the rules of procedure, the Committee on Disarmament is required at the beginning of each annual session to adopt its agenda and programme of work.

To this end, numerous consultations and informal meetings have been held, in which all members of the Committee have taken an active part.

As you know, the Group of 21 and the group of socialist countries put forward a proposal to include a new item, on the prevention of nuclear war, in the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament for 1983 and to set up an ad hoc working group on that subject. However, the results of the consultations held and of the discussion of this matter at informal meetings have shown that some delegations are not ready to agree to the inclusion of that item in the agenda. This was again made clear in the consultations I held today. As you know, the socialist countries have also proposed the inclusion in the agenda for the Committee's present session of the questions of the prohibition of the nuclear neutron weapon and ensuring the safe development of nuclear energy. On these questions, the socialist countries have shown a spirit of co-operation and flexibility in order to facilitate the prompt adoption of the Committee's agenda. I believe that further consultations should be held on these new items.

I very much regret that, in spite of all the efforts made, the agenda and programme of work of the Committee have still not been adopted, not to mention the settlement of the other organizational matters.

In spite of this deadlock in its work, the Committee has re-established the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, and has reached a certain understanding about the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on seismic events.

In the present difficult international situation, the urgent tasks before the Committee require it to proceed without delay to a consideration of the substance of issues. The activity of the Committee cannot and should not be divorced from present-day realities. The times demand the positive solution of the problem of disarmament. This compels us to make the maximum efforts.

The peoples of the world place serious and great hopes in this multilateral negotiating forum. This obliges all members of the Committee to show political will and a spirit of co-operation in order to achieve tangible results on the most important questions of the cessation of the arms race and disarmament, particularly in the nuclear sphere.

In conclusion, I should like to express our great gratitude to the Secretary of the Committee, Ambassador Jaipal, his deputy, Mr. Berasategui, and all members of the secretariat, for their assistance and efficient co-operation.

(The Chairman)

I should also like to express my gratitude to the co-ordinators of the groups and to individual delegations for the understanding and support they have given me in carrying out the responsible task of the Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of February this year.

I should like to offer the good wishes of the Mongolian delegation to the delegation of Morocco, headed by Ambassador Skalli, for its success in the office of Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament during the coming month.

The next plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, 1 March 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

The meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.