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CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 18 April 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Simon Bullut (Kenya)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 504th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the beginning, may I extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, His Excellency Oskar Fischer, who will be our first speaker at this plenary meeting. In doing so, I should like to note the active participation and the contributions made by the German Democratic Republic to the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum since joining it in 1975. A number of proposals advanced by the German Democratic Republic in this Conference, as well as in other forums dealing with disarmament at the regional and multilateral levels, highlight the importance of its involvement in disarmament negotiations. In noting those proposals, I should like to stress that this is the first time since the Conference on Disarmament was constituted in 1979 that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic has come to convey to the members of the Conference its views on those important questions with which we are dealing at present. It is therefore with particular pleasure that we are receiving today His Excellency Oskar Fischer.

The Conference begins today its further consideration of outstanding matters. Nevertheless, in conformity with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the German Democratic Republic, the United States of America and Iraq. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, His Excellency Oskar Fischer.

Mr. FISCHER (German Democratic Republic) (translated from German): First of all, I wish to express my gratitude for having the opportunity to outline before this forum the position of the German Democratic Republic on arms limitation and disarmament and, at the same time, to brief you on the major results of the session of the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, which has just concluded in Berlin.

The communiqué adopted at that session points out that the progress achieved in consolidating peace and disarmament offers favourable opportunities for expanding co-operation between States and peoples, notwithstanding the complicated and contradictory situation in the world. A sense of realism as well as concern for the future makes it imperative to use the favourable political conditions resolutely in the interest of disarmament. The shift from confrontation towards detente is increasingly reflected in the bilateral, regional and multilateral relations of States.

As agreed, Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles are being scrapped. A first set of confidence-building and security-building measures adopted at Stockholm are already proving their worth in Europe. The negotiations on conventional disarmament as well as on further confidence-building and security-building measures have started in Vienna. The political settlement of regional conflicts is gradually getting under way, even though

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

the process is far from being continuous and trouble-free everywhere. The role of the United Nations in the settlement of regional conflicts has been strengthened. The Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons held at the beginning of this year was a testament to the resolve, shared world-wide, to banish death-spelling chemical weapons as early as possible, once and for all. All this should encourage your Conference to work towards imparting fresh and important impulses to the process of disarmament and to produce pertinent results. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic will do everything to achieve this.

I should like to thank you warmly, Mr. President, for your cordial words of welcome and wish you success in the performance of your duties. May I also add a word of appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina, for his long-standing and tireless efforts on behalf of disarmament?

Security through disarmament - this is what common sense dictates. It is the key to a peaceful world. Very shortly, we will be marking the fiftieth anniversary of the unleashing of the Second World War. "Never again Fascism - Never again war" was the vow which anti-fascists made in 1945 after their liberation from concentration camps and prisons. This vow became State doctrine when the German Democratic Republic was founded 40 years ago. Today, this is all the more important in view of the fact that in some countries neo-fascist groupings are again alarmingly gaining ground and that right-wing extremists are being made politically and socially acceptable.

The socialist German State is making every effort to ensure that never again will war, but only peace, emanate from German soil. Hence it is both historical experience and our exposed situation at the line of contact between the two alliances which particularly determine our policy of dialogue, our committed stand at the United Nations, at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament and in regional forums. Mindful of this major responsibility, we have proposed measures designed to enhance security in the sensitive Central European region. It was therefore a matter of course for the German Democratic Republic to promote the conclusion of the Treaty Between the USSR and the United States on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, and to contribute towards its implementation.

At the Vienna negotiations on conventional disarmament and on confidence-building measures in Europe, the German Democratic Republic and its allies are striving for agreements on lower levels of forces and all relevant categories of weapons. Surprise attacks must no longer be possible. After the first round, it is apparent that all participants want reductions with strict verification. This is a good common basis. It is also obvious that there are divergences which have to be overcome in a spirit of good will, and with every party setting a good example. The common objective of a secure Europe in a secure world must prevail over lop-sided alliance interests. This is our perception of a new thinking oriented towards the goal of co-operative security structures in Europe. And, as you will know, the German Democratic Republic and its allies were not content with words. For example, early this year the German Democratic Republic decided that by 1990 - unilaterally and

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

independently of negotiations - it will reduce its armed forces by 10,000 troops, cut defence expenditure by 10 per cent, disband 6 tank regiments and 1 air force wing and deactivate 600 tanks and 50 combat aircraft. Implementation of these measures will be started this month. The disbandment of the tank regiments will be concluded by the end of this year.

I wish to recall at this point that the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty plan to reduce their armed forces unilaterally by a total of 581,300 troops. The reductions also include 12,751 tanks, 10,030 artillery systems, 1,010 combat aircraft, 895 armoured vehicles, as well as some tactical nuclear systems. These steps by the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union and other socialist States are advance moves without parallel so far. Like the data submitted on the correlation of forces in Europe, they prove the sincerity of our approach. Now it is time for the NATO member States to come up with a constructive answer. The new way of thinking and the new approach to things must be practised by both sides.

Just a few days ago, the Foreign Ministers of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty held a session in Berlin where they reaffirmed their policy aimed at bringing about a fundamental improvement in the situation in Europe and the world at large. The socialist States advocate an intensified political dialogue on the key issues of world development. They plead for a comprehensive approach to the strengthening of international peace and security pursuant to the United Nations Charter, with the role and effectiveness of that universal organization constantly growing. In their view, it is imperative now to redouble efforts everywhere towards continuing the disarmament process.

I would like to draw your attention to the Declaration on Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe, which was adopted at the Berlin session. The Warsaw Treaty States deem it necessary to raise this issue now and in this fashion because, firstly, the danger of a surprise attack and large-scale offensive operations will not be removed so long as tactical nuclear arms remain on the European continent; secondly, the continued existence of such arms could become an impediment to the negotiations on conventional disarmament in Europe, while their elimination could promote these negotiations; thirdly, a "modernization" or further build-up of tactical nuclear arms would destabilize the situation in Europe as regards military strategy; and fourthly, it should not be forgotten that the use of tactical nuclear arms would automatically trigger a major nuclear conflict, while their early removal would facilitate world-wide nuclear disarmament.

For this reason, the allied socialist States propose to the member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that separate negotiations should be begun on the reduction of tactical nuclear arms in Europe. We place great emphasis on effective international verification of the reduction and elimination of these arms. This could also include the establishment of an international verification commission.

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

The Warsaw Treaty States hold that the unilateral reduction of their armed forces and armaments has improved conditions for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Europe. This also goes for the initiatives of the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe. If disarmament efforts are to bear fruit, old clichés of thinking in terms of military strength and the drive for superiority must be given up. Doctrines of deterrence lead to the development of new menacing concepts and weapons systems, and they fuel the arms race.

What gives rise to concern are plans concerning new nuclear weaponry in the direct vicinity of the German Democratic Republic. Such designs are tantamount to undermining the INF Treaty. Be it in the nuclear or the conventional field, every twist of the arms spiral is irreconcilable with the need to create more security and stability in the world at lower levels of armaments. The peoples do not want the "nuclear components" to be retained, neither do they want new means of destruction. What they seek instead are reliable co-operative security structures. The Foreign Ministers' session in Berlin has provided new impulses in that quest.

The prohibition of chemical weapons, a task which can be solved in the near future, ranks prominently on the agenda of this Conference. Another "global zero" solution would be an essential link in the overall process of disarmament. In Berlin, the Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty States reaffirmed their determination to do everything they can in order to attain that goal as soon as possible. The value of the Paris Conference regarding the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention at the earliest date will now have to be measured by the readiness of all sides to support practical solutions. Clear signals would be given if, firstly, all States having such weapons were to stop producing them now and were to begin destroying their stocks; and if, secondly, the other countries were to renounce the acquisition of chemical weapons. Such moves would stem the further proliferation of such weapons, both vertically and horizontally, even before a convention is concluded.

We welcome the decision of the Soviet Union to start destroying chemical weapons this year after having stopped their production earlier. The interest in a complete ban on chemical weapons voiced by President George Bush could already be convincingly demonstrated if the United States decided to renounce the further manufacture of binary weapons.

In the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons under the chairmanship of Ambassador Morel of France, important steps have been taken for the intensification of the talks. Now it appears that it is time for a meeting of the Conference on Disarmament at foreign minister level to set the course for a purposeful effort to complete the convention. The foreign ministers could concentrate on key issues, i.e. challenge inspections, the composition and decision-making of the Executive Council of the future organization for chemical disarmament, and sanctions in cases of violation of the convention. The German Democratic Republic is ready to participate in such a meeting.

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

The verification procedure to be provided for by the convention will reach deeply into civilian chemical industries. While the legitimate interests of those industries must be protected, they must not serve as a pretext for undercutting the verification measures needed to make the convention work. The chemical industry of the German Democratic Republic already supports the cause of the convention in many ways. My country is prepared to accept any form of verification required under such an instrument. The German Democratic Republic has already submitted data on its chemical production relevant to the convention, and has carried out a national trial inspection. A facility of the pharmaceutical plant "VEB Arzneimittelwerk Dresden" will be available from the month of May for an international trial inspection.

We agree with all those who consider the elaboration of modalities and procedures for challenge inspections to be a high political priority. In this regard, trial inspections in the military field would also be advisable. Ideas on what procedure should be followed in future inspections could be tested and fleshed out.

We consider that trial inspections "on challenge" might be undertaken in a bilateral as well as a multilateral framework. For example, the German Democratic Republic would be ready to prepare such an inspection together with the Federal Republic of Germany and carry it out on the basis of reciprocity.

Transparency and openness create favourable conditions for the completion of the convention and for its observance. The German Democratic Republic is in favour of making full use of every chance that brings us closer to a comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons. A zone free of chemical weapons in Central Europe, for instance, could be established relatively fast. We have taken note with interest of the announcement made by the United States that it will examine ways of speeding up the withdrawal of its chemical weapons from the Federal Republic of Germany. Would it not be logical, in these circumstances, to ensure Central Europe's freedom from chemical weapons by an international instrument, thus giving a powerful boost to the elimination of these weapons on a global scale?

At this point, I wish to repeat and reaffirm what I said both before the United Nations General Assembly and at the Paris Conference in January: the German Democratic Republic has no chemical weapons, nor has it such weapons of other States stationed on its territory. It is neither engaged in the development of chemical weapons nor does it have the equipment for their production. The German Democratic Republic is ready to join a chemical weapons convention immediately after its conclusion. Let us make 1989 the decisive year in the drive for a ban on chemical weapons. Chemistry in the service of life and not of death should be everyone's watchword.

There is no doubt that a convention banning chemical weapons would also stimulate further global disarmament measures. This applies in particular to the nuclear field. Indisputably, Soviet-American negotiations play an outstanding role in that area. We advocate the early conclusion of a treaty

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

providing for a 50 per cent cut in the strategic offensive weapons of the USSR and the United States, together with adherence to the ABM Treaty. In view of the rate at which science and technology are advancing today, any standstill in disarmament negotiations is bound to add to the arms build-up. As for SDI, it would not only bring no benefit to security, but would further destabilize it.

Can there be a forum better suited than the Conference on Disarmament to translate the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free world into reality, especially since all States possessing such weapons are represented here?

A first step could be the elaboration of principles to govern nuclear disarmament. The Final Document of the first United Nations special session devoted to disarmament, as well as far-reaching proposals by the USSR, India, China and other States, provide a solid foundation for such an endeavour. All relevant aspects, including military doctrines, verification and the relationship between nuclear and conventional disarmament, should be included.

Around the world, peoples realize that account is taken of their vital interests by such decisions as that announced in London by Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to halt the production of highly enriched uranium intended for military purposes in the USSR this year and to decommission two more plutonium reactors. These are major steps towards the complete cessation of the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, and thus towards implementing the programme for a nuclear-weapon-free world. The people of the German Democratic Republic demand that the United States of America and all member States of NATO not only abstain from putting obstacles in that path, but make up their minds to become reliable companions for all to follow with singleness of purpose the path towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

A complete prohibition of nuclear weapon tests would put up barriers not only against the further spread of those weapons, but also against their modernization. It would be the litmus test of willingness to put a stop to the nuclear arms race. The nuclear Powers are called upon to live up to their special responsibility in that context. The repeatedly expressed readiness of the Soviet Union to reimpose its moratorium on all nuclear explosions if the United States does the same is highly commendable.

The Conference on Disarmament should prepare the ground for the complete cessation of nuclear weapon tests and work out the elements of a multilateral treaty on this subject, including the necessary verification systems. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic presented a detailed concept for this in March.

The Conference on Disarmament is mandated to work out measures designed to prevent an arms race in outer space. The German Democratic Republic has suggested an agreement banning anti-satellite weapons. The abuse of space research and technology for armaments purposes would have incalculable consequences for mankind. It is essential to guard against this by a

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

preventive ban while there is still time. Is it not far better to use satellites for the verification of disarmament rather than for destruction? Mankind needs the exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes. War must be defeated while we are still in times of peace. Science and technology must not serve the arms race. They must be used for the benefit of disarmament and of social and economic development.

In a recent statement, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, said:

"Many global problems are awaiting a solution, which requires concerted efforts by the international community. I am thinking of hunger and underdevelopment, the threatened environment and diseases, but also the need for the peaceful use of outer space or for the mastery of sophisticated technologies for the benefit of mankind. Peace and disarmament are indispensable to progress in these endeavours. Therefore, the desire is growing among the international public that there must be no pause in the disarmament process."

The Conference on Disarmament bears a large measure of responsibility in that respect.

The PRESIDENT: I thank His Excellency Oskar Fischer, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, for his important statement and for the best wishes he extended to me. I now give the floor to the second speaker on my list, the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Friedersdorf.

Mr. FRIEDERSDORF (United States of America): I have asked for the floor today to commemorate an anniversary - an anniversary our delegation considers of signal importance. It was five years ago today, on 18 April 1984, that the United States introduced CD/500, a draft treaty for a comprehensive chemical weapons ban. We consider this an anniversary important for two reasons. One is that CD/500 introduced what was, at that time, an entirely new concept for overcoming the greatest obstacle in the path to a chemical weapons ban, that obstacle being verification. The concept we introduced on that date was mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection. But this anniversary also serves as a sombre reminder that five long years have passed without the Conference on Disarmament reaching consensus that such a verification régime is necessary or acceptable.

Our delegation has felt some concern that more tangible results have not been achieved in chemical weapons negotiations thus far during the 1989 session. We returned to Geneva with expectations that significant inroads could be made in resolving the remaining unsettled issues with which we were confronted. I know that other delegations had similar expectations. Indeed, our delegation was concerned that, with the new United States Administration reviewing arms control and disarmament policy, progress in the chemical weapons negotiations might outdistance our delegation's instructions. That has

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

not proven to be the case. On almost all issues examined in our working groups, there is such wide divergence of views that consensus seems as distant as it was before the Paris Conference. It would be overly pessimistic to attribute this state of affairs to any general retrenchment, although we have not witnessed much flexibility in positions taken by various delegations.

We were enjoined in the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference to redouble our efforts to achieve a chemical weapons ban, and we have endeavoured to do that. Under the guidance of our energetic and capable Ad hoc Committee Chairman, Ambassador Pierre Morel, we have maintained a fast pace as we addressed a large number of important issues which affect the national interests of all delegations. It seems to our delegation that States have been preoccupied with preserving their own positions, and less concerned with reconciling their views with those of others. We would hope that the forthcoming pause in our negotiations will enable all delegations to catch their breath and reassess their approach to these issues, with a view toward compromise and a convergence of views.

Our delegation is concerned, however, about the disquieting possibility that, while all delegations earnestly may want a chemical weapons ban, they may not want the same chemical weapons ban. That is, we are concerned that there are fundamental aspects of this convention upon which there is no agreement, and no willingness to compromise.

I will limit my remarks today to only one of those issues - the issue of mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection. This issue has loomed in the background as something too hard to confront head on - something to be skirted as we have attempted to resolve other, less provoking issues. But, if we are to complete a verification régime for the convention, this issue cannot be avoided. Mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection is the linchpin of such a verification régime, and until we all have acknowledged that fact, there will be no firm foundation for the resolution of other verification issues.

Consider the activity of Working Group 1 on the critical issue of verification of non-production of chemical weapons. We have been unable to make progress in this area despite the commendable stewardship of the Working Group Chairman, Mr. Lüdeking of the Federal Republic of Germany. This lack of progress is not attributable to a lack of effort. Many delegations have addressed the concept of a "verification gap", and I am sure other delegations also have carefully considered this topic. The Federal Republic of Germany and, more recently, the United Kingdom, have tabled papers offering proposals designed to fill this so-called gap.

Although our delegation is not convinced there is such a gap, we willingly participated in the examination of this important topic, because the United States has been particularly concerned about civil facilities that are capable of producing chemical weapons agents or key precursors, but which would not be declared under present provisions of the "rolling text". After several months' work on this subject, however, our delegation is convinced that we are approaching the question of the so-called "verification gap" from the wrong direction, and I will explain what I mean.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

A verification gap necessarily presumes that there is some discernible boundary defining either side of the void. More specifically, as applied to the draft chemical weapons ban as set out in the "rolling text", any gap in verification would be bounded on the one side by routine inspection of declared facilities, as defined in article VI of CD/881, and on the other side by ... what? The quick answer would seem to be challenge inspection, as defined in article IX. And it is here that we come to the source of our difficulties: we have not yet reached agreement on the content of article IX. Indeed, the only elaboration of views on this aspect of the convention is found in a Chairman's paper in appendix II of CD/881, which is prefaced with the Caveat that "nothing contained therein constitutes any agreement and therefore does not bind any delegation". Since we have not yet defined the boundaries of any so-called "verification gap", it is understandable that we are having difficulty devising a verification scheme to fill such a gap. We must reach agreement on article IX before we can determine if there is a gap in the verification régime of the draft text, and, if so, how it should be filled. For that reason, our delegation believes it is time to get back to basics.

The position of the United States on article IX of the chemical weapons convention is well known. When President George Bush, then Vice-President, tabled the United States draft convention, he made clear that mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection is indispensable to an effective convention. He stated:

"For a chemical weapons ban to work, each party must have confidence that the other parties are abiding by it. This elementary, common-sense principle is the essence of what we mean by verification. No sensible Government enters into those international contracts known as treaties unless it can ascertain - or verify - that it is getting what it contracted for."

As related to a chemical weapons convention, Vice-President Bush explained that each party must know:

"First, that all stocks have been destroyed;

"Second, that all declared production facilities have been destroyed;

"Third, that the declared stocks really do constitute all the stocks;

"And fourthly, that the declared facilities are all the facilities."

For the first two requirements Mr. Bush enumerated, the United States proposed continuous, on-site monitoring and periodic random inspection. We are pleased that, during the past five years, there has evolved substantial acceptance of these proposals by the members of the Conference on Disarmament, although we recognize that there remain specific aspects to be addressed.

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

Regarding the third and fourth essentials for verification, the Vice-President stated:

"The verification difficulties inherent in the problem of undeclared sites - determining that there are no hidden stocks and no clandestine production facilities - remain our most formidable challenge. It is formidable because the problem of undeclared sites can be resolved only if States commit themselves to a new, but absolutely necessary degree of openness."

That assessment is no less accurate today than it was five years ago. Indeed, as recognized in Working Group discussions, verification is becoming a more formidable task as a result of two continuing trends: first, the trend in the chemical industry toward versatile, multi-purpose facilities easily convertible to production of chemical weapons agents and precursors; second, the configuring of chemical facilities to comply with stricter environmental and safety standards, which makes it more difficult to distinguish a chemical facility manufacturing chemical-weapons-related products from those facilities engaged in more benign production.

To allay concerns about undeclared chemical weapons stockpiles and clandestine production, Vice-President Bush proposed the unprecedented verification procedure he called "open invitation" inspection - a mutual obligation of parties to open their territory to mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection, as set forth in article X of CD/500.

Recognizing the intrusiveness of such inspections, the Vice-President stated that the United States was willing to pay that price because "an effective ban on chemical weapons requires this kind of 'open invitation' inspections we propose." He concluded that:

"If the international community recognizes that such a provision is the sine qua non of an effective chemical weapons ban and joins us in subscribing to it, we will not only have realized the noble longing for a treaty that actually bans chemical weapons, but we will have changed in an altogether salutary manner the way governments do business."

Thus far, the international community, as represented in our negotiations by the members and participating observers of the Conference on Disarmament, has been slow to recognize that such stringent verification measures are essential to a chemical weapons ban. Significant progress was made in that direction in August 1987 when the Soviet Union, which had been one of the most vocal opponents of mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection, announced through its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, that the Soviet Union accepted the principle of "mandatory challenge inspections without the right of refusal."

So long as the United States and the Soviet Union were advocating opposing views on this issue, some other delegations found it unnecessary to express, or perhaps even to formulate, their national positions. Shortly

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

after the Soviet pronouncement, however, the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Rolf Ekéus, held intense consultations on the subject of challenge inspection. These consultations revealed that, while there was a convergence of views on some procedural aspects of an inspection, not all delegations were able to accept the fundamental concept of the United States proposal. Recognizing this as an area of major disagreement, the members of the conference chose to move on to other, less controversial issues and have not returned for serious re-examination of article IX during the past year. Perhaps it is time for us to do so.

While the members of the Conference on Disarmament contemplated year after year the concept of mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection, such inspections have become familiar verification measures in the implementation of other international agreements. Close to 20 such inspections have been conducted pursuant to the Stockholm accord. Furthermore, under the INF Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union are each allowed up to 20 such inspections during each of the Treaty's first three years. Both sides have conducted such inspections during the first year, at a pace that indicates that each side will use most, if not all, of their first-year quotas. While the verification régimes of the Stockholm agreement and the INF Treaty are not identical to that proposed in CD/500, their inspections are mandatory, they are on-site, and they are conducted on short notice.

Moreover, while the members of the Conference on Disarmament contemplated year after year the concept of such inspections, chemical weapons have been used, and possession of those weapons has become more widespread.

In closing, I would repeat the observation made in this chamber last Thursday by the distinguished Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Jaroszek: "Time is not our ally in work on the complete elimination of chemical weapons." We cannot afford to wait another five years to come to grips with this difficult verification issue.

Mr. AL-KITAL (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): Speaking on behalf of my country, Iraq, it is a pleasure to take part in the work of the Conference on Disarmament, to which the international community attaches special importance since it is the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament matters. Our participation in this work derives from the fact that the international community as a whole has become convinced of the importance of interested non-members taking part, although our requests to that effect were initially rejected. It is also my pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency over the Conference, especially as you are a citizen of Africa, whose situation is greatly similar to that of our own region as regards disarmament, peace and security.

Iraq, together with other peace-loving peoples, has contributed impetus to the efforts of the international community to establish international relations based on respect for the United Nations Charter, the principles of international law, equality, mutual respect, the renunciation of the use or the threat of use of force and the renunciation of hegemony and policies of expansion, aggression and interference in the affairs of other countries,

(Mr. Al-Kital, Iraq)

because we are convinced that all these principles are the corner-stone for the establishment of genuine peace and the mobilization of the energy and resources of peoples in furtherance of development and the achievement of the necessary conditions for a life-style worthy of human beings and the advancement of civilization. In this connection I wish to recall what the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq said at the Paris Conference on chemical weapons, held at the beginning of the year: "We aspire to a world with a collective system of security, in which there would be no need for the use of any weapon whatsoever".

Our interest in current negotiations within the context of the Conference stems from the hope that they will be successful in achieving important, tangible results in line with the expectations of the international community, namely, a real reduction in current armament levels and the elimination of the deadly threat to mankind posed by the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, whose destructive capability is far greater than that of any other weapon. The Conference on Disarmament and before that the Committee of 18 have some noteworthy achievements to their credit. These are reflected in the elaboration of international treaties and conventions, such as the non-proliferation Treaty, the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty and others. The uninterrupted continuation of the international dialogue in the context of the Conference is a substantial achievement in itself, an effort supplementing those made by the United Nations elsewhere and within the context of bilateral and regional negotiations. However, if we look at what has happened over the same period in the arms race, we see that many dangerous developments have taken place. For example, the nuclear arsenals of the major Powers, especially those of the two super-Powers, have continued to increase both quantitatively and qualitatively and reached unprecedented levels. Underground nuclear weapon tests have continued, making it possible to develop new nuclear weapons, with enhanced destructive capability, and innovate in nuclear technology. Delivery vehicles for nuclear warheads have been developed considerably, and new missiles and aircraft have been deployed. There are further possibilities for the militarization of outer space, since many satellites have been launched for various military purposes. The number of nuclear-weapon countries has increased; indeed, reliable reports indicate that countries which have not acceded to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty have been able to develop and produce nuclear weapons, Israel and South Africa being foremost on the list. In the midst of such vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation, negotiations have not brought us any closer to effective measures to strengthen the security of non-nuclear-weapon States by protecting them against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. During the same period there has been both vertical and horizontal proliferation in respect of chemical and conventional weapons as well.

From what I have said it can be clearly seen that the results achieved so far through multilateral negotiations in the sphere of disarmament have been very modest. In fact, to be more precise, it should be said that the arms race has by far outstripped the modest measures which the CD has managed to achieve. This should lead us to redouble our efforts and promote a proper climate for effective and broad measures to be adopted within reasonable time

(Mr. Al-Kital, Iraq)

limits. Iraq, like most countries, is convinced that the essential aim of disarmament measures is to strengthen world peace and security for each and every State. This is why it is not possible for certain results to take the form of disarmament measures benefiting only one State or group of States at any given point or stage in the process, because all countries must enjoy equal security during all the stages of negotiations. In this connection, we would like to reaffirm the great importance we attach to negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament and our desire to participate in them in a constructive spirit, giving them our full support, so as to contribute to their rapid and growing success, which we regard as a guarantee of international peace and security, and in furtherance of the objectives set out in the United Nations Charter.

We would like to speak briefly on the topics on the agenda of the Conference. First, the elaboration of a convention on a total nuclear test ban is one of the prime concerns of all countries. No significant progress has been achieved in that area since the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty; in fact, the Conference has so far not even been able to establish a committee to deal with the subject. Given the importance we attach to this question, Iraq has joined the countries calling for a review conference of the States parties to the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty aimed at reviewing the Treaty in pursuance of the aims I have referred to.

Secondly, nuclear disarmament is the primary objective pursued by the international community, because without it there remains a sort of latent disaster threatening the world as a whole. What has been done in this area between the Soviet Union and the United States, although important, is but a small step in the context of the extensive measures which must be taken without delay. This is why nuclear disarmament must remain the principal focus of multilateral negotiations, and must not be treated as a bilateral issue under any circumstances. Bilateral negotiations are not an end in themselves, in which the United Nations and multilateral negotiations no longer have a role to play. Bilateral negotiations should be regarded as a process strengthening multilateral negotiations and helping in their success. We believe that the level of scientific and technological development that the world has reached today should make it simple to adopt verification methods in the field of nuclear disarmament and prohibit all nuclear weapon tests, if there is enough political will to do so.

Thirdly, the specific characteristics of each region of the world have to be taken into account in the adoption of disarmament measures. For example, in the Middle East, where Israel has a monopoly of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament measures should be comprehensive and simultaneous in respect of all weapons of mass destruction and that region should be declared free of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction and be placed under effective international supervision. This first of all requires that all the countries in the region, including Israel, should accede to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty.

(Mr. Al-Kital, Iraq)

Fourthly, the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference on chemical weapons reflects the importance which the international community attaches to the total elimination of these weapons and the prohibition of their production and use, in the context of the commitment of the participating countries to the strengthening of international peace and security in furtherance of the objectives of the United Nations Charter and progress towards effective measures for disarmament. The Final Declaration also stressed disarmament priorities with reference to the Final Document of the first United Nations special session on disarmament, held in 1978, and the right of all States to peace and security. In accordance with these views Iraq will continue to participate in the work of the committees of the Conference, as an expression of its concern and strong desire to contribute to international efforts to rid the world of all weapons of mass destruction and create a world in which all States enjoy an equal right to peace and security and in which confrontation and the threat of the use of force would be replaced by political dialogue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Iraq for his statement and for the kind words that he addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage? This does not appear to be the case.

I should like now to refer to other questions. I received, last Thursday, a request from a non-member to participate in the work of the Conference as well as of its subsidiary bodies on chemical weapons and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The communication received from Oman was circulated in the delegations' pigeon-holes on the same date. I intend therefore to take up that request, for decision, at our next plenary meeting on Thursday.

I should also like to inform you that, as a new round of the Iran-Iraq ministerial talks will be held at Geneva from 20 April, with the attendance of the Foreign Ministers of those countries and chaired by the Secretary-General, some adjustments will be needed concerning the conference rooms assigned to the Conference. In that connection, I wish to inform you that, from tomorrow, Wednesday 19 April, all meetings and consultations of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will be held in conference room XVI. I wish also to recall that the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons will meet in this conference room, immediately after we adjourn this plenary meeting.

I have no other business for today and I shall now close this meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday 20 April at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.