

FINAL RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND THIRD PLENARY MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Thursday, 28 March 1985, at 10.00 a.m.

President:

Mr. A.R. Taylhardat

(Venezuela)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria:

Mr. A. BELAID

Mr. H. RABEHI

Argentina:

Mr. J. CARASALES

Mr. R. GARCIA MORITAN

Australia:

Mr. R. BUTLER

Mr. R. ROWE

Ms. J. COURTNEY

Ms. S. FREEMAN

Belgium:

Mr. M. DEPASSE

Brazil:

Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA

Mr. S. de QUEIROZ DUARTE

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. TELLALOV

Mr. V. BOJILOV

Mr. H. HALATCHEV

Mr. R. DEYANOV

Mr. P. POPTCHEV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

U HLA MYINT

Canada:

Mr. A. BEESLEY

Mr. R. ROCHON

Mr. M. SHENSTONE

China:

Mr. QIAN JIADONG

Ms. WANG ZHIYUN

Mr. LIU ZHONGREN

Mr. SHI JICHENG

Mr. SHI JINKUN

Mr. LIN CHENG

Mr. LI BENSONG

Cuba:

Mr. C. LECHUGA HEVIA
Mr. P. NUNEZ MOSQUERA

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. A. CIMA
Mr. J. BAJGAR

Egypt:

Mr. S. ALFARARGI
Mr. M. BADR

Ethiopia:

Mr. F. YOHANNES

France:

Mr. F. de la GORCE
Mr. H. RENIE
Mr. GESBERT
Mr. G. MONTASSIER

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. H. ROSE
Mr. L. MUELLER
Mr. M. SCHNEIDER
Mr. F. SAYATZ

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. H. WEGENER
Mr. F. ELBE
Mr. M. GERDTS
Mr. W-N. GERMANN

Hungary:

Mr. D. MEISZTER
Mr. F. GAJDA
Mr. T. TOTH

India:

Mr. S. KANT SHARMA

Indonesia:

Mr. S. SUTOWARDOYO
Mr. N. WISNOEMOERTI
Mr. HARYO MATARAM
Mr. I. DAMANIK
Ms. R. TANZIL

Islamic Republic of Iran:

Mr. F. SHAHABI SIRJANI

Italy:

Mr. F. PIAGGESI

Mr. M. PAVESE

Mr. R. DI CARLO

Japan:

Mr. R. IMAI

Mr. M. KONISHI

Mr. T. KAWAKITA

Mr. T. ISHIGURI

Kenya:

Mr. P.N. MWAURA

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES

Ms. S. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO

Mr. P. MACEDO RIBA

Mongolia:

Mr. L. BAYART

Mr. S-O. BOLD

Morocco:

Mr. A. SKALLI

Mr. O. HILALE

Netherlands:

Mr. J. RAMAKER

Mr. R.J. AKKERMAN

Mr. J.J. OOMS

Nigeria:

Mr. B.O. TONWE

Mr. C.V. UDEDIBIA

Pakistan:

Mr. M. AHMAD

Mr. Z. AKRAM

Peru:

Mr. J. GONZALES TERRONES

Poland:

Mr. S. TURBANSKI

Mr. J. CIALOWICZ

Romania:

Mr. T. MELESCANU

Mr. A. POPESCU

Sri Lanka:

Mr. J. DHANAPALA

Mr. P. KARIYAWASAM

Sweden:

Mr. R. EKEUS

Mr. L-E. WINGREN

Mrs. E. BONNIER

Mr. H. BERGLUND

Mrs. A.M. LAU

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN

Mr. B.P. PROKOFIEV

Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV

Mr. A.M. SHMATOV

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

Mr. R.J.S. EDIS

Mr. D.A. SLINN

United States of America:

Mr. D. LOWITZ

Mr. T. BARTHELEMY

Mr. H.W. DAVIDSON

Mr. D. DORN

Mr. R. SCOTT

Mr. P. CORDEN

Ms. K. CRITTENBERGER

Ms. K. WHITE

Mr. R. MIKULAK

Mr. S. GARNETT

Mr. L. BELGARD

Venezuela:

Mr. A. TAYLHARDAT

Mr. O. GARCIA

Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS

Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mr. O. MONSHEMVULA

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

Mr. M. KOMATINA

Deputy Secretary-General of the
Conference on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 303rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference today continues the consideration of agenda item 4, "chemical weapons". In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, however, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

As you will recall, we have scheduled for today an informal meeting of the Conference. In this connection, I should like to inform the Conference that the secretariat has received a request from Switzerland to participate in the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons and in the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. We shall consider that request at the informal meeting and subsequently formalize whatever decision is reached when the plenary meeting is resumed.

The list of speakers for today includes the representatives of the United States of America, France, Australia, the German Democratic Republic and Zaire. I now give the floor to the first speaker on the list, the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Lowitz.

Mr. LOWITZ (United States of America): Mr. President, negotiations to ban chemical weapons have been under way for over 10 weeks thus far this year. During our plenary sessions devoted to these important negotiations, it is appropriate to take stock -- to determine what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. That is what I propose to do today.

1985 marks the sixth year of the existence -- in one form or another -- of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. Under the leadership of a series of dedicated chairmen, significant progress has been made towards a complete and verifiable ban on chemical weapons. Many delegations have contributed to the development of guiding concepts and to the elaboration of specific provisions.

Last year my own delegation presented a draft convention (document CD/500) which built upon the work already accomplished in the Conference and incorporated a number of new ideas of our own. The convention would provide a complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons without undue interference in the use of chemicals for permitted purposes. To ensure confidence in compliance -- confidence which is essential for an effective ban -- the convention would provide for a system of routine declarations and inspections of key facilities, supplemented by a flexible system for resolving concerns that may arise. It is our view that the types of verification measures contained in the United States draft convention would serve the interests of all countries.

This year, Finland and the United Kingdom have presented carefully elaborated and very constructive Working Papers. We welcome their dedicated work.

But despite our efforts, an impartial assessment of our present situation must be that the really difficult problems remain. Moreover, time does not favour those that seek a chemical weapons ban. Let me address the latter point first.

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

Information available to us -- and the dramatic evidence that chemical weapons have been used in several recent conflicts -- make clear that chemical weapons capabilities are spreading. In fact, more than a dozen States possess chemical weapons. The spread of chemical weapons poses a threat to all countries, particularly developing countries.

As more countries acquire chemical weapons, the likelihood increases that chemical weapons will be used, causing horrible suffering and a weakening of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Both fashion and fear may prompt additional countries to obtain chemical weapons and this dangerous process of the spread of chemical weapons could begin to feed on itself. At some point an effective chemical weapons ban could become almost impossible to negotiate because of the number of countries with security requirements to be satisfied, not the least of which would be the extensiveness of the verification system.

The United States has expressed concern over the use of chemical weapons by several countries in various regions of the world -- in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, and in South-East Asia. We have strongly supported international investigation of reports of the use of chemical weapons. We believe that the legal and moral authority of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 must be upheld and that urgent attention by the world community is called for whenever use of chemical weapons is reported.

A year ago, on 13 March 1984, the United States representative to this Conference conveyed our conclusion that Iraq had used lethal chemical weapons in its conflict with Iran and that this constituted a serious breach of the protocol and of related rules of customary international law. Today it is my sad task to report our conclusion that Iraq has again used chemical weapons, in the recent fighting with Iran. My Government condemns the use of chemical weapons in violation of international law and conventions whenever and wherever it occurs, including this latest instance.

There is little doubt that recent violations of the Geneva Protocol are a threat to the integrity of the most venerable of arms control agreements and, in fact, a threat to the foundations of the arms control process itself: the belief that States may find genuine security based on international agreements and law instead of their own armaments. This should be a sobering thought for a conference seeking to negotiate new arms control agreements.

All States need confidence that the treaties they enter into are being complied with. When that confidence is eroded so is the hope we place in an international structure based on law.

Many nations prefer to treat compliance concerns as a matter only for the accuser and the accused. Yet in matters of international security, especially in the nuclear age, there can be no spectators. A State's responsibility for an arms control agreement must not end when it is signed. States cannot remain indifferent when such basic interests as the integrity of present and future treaties are involved: they must take an active role. However, the United States is not asking other nations to choose sides, but only to realize that the allegations are sufficiently troubling -- especially but not exclusively in the area of chemical weapons -- to warrant an active interest in the matter, including a search for resolution of the disputes.

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

Some States have justified silence by citing their high standards of proof. Indeed, we would agree that the evidence is complex and that the world rarely yields incontrovertible proof. But does this mean that States should do nothing at all? Would they have those responsible for law enforcement in their own countries refuse even to investigate a case until the courts could guarantee a conviction? Such an approach would yield neither justice nor confidence within a country, and it cannot be expected to provide a stable system of international agreements.

States must realize that there is a direct relationship between the manner in which compliance concerns have been dealt with in the past and the kinds of verification measures in new arms control initiatives. The verification proposals in the United States draft convention are, in part, a direct result of our experience with the international response to our concerns about non-compliance. This experience forms a key part of the background to understanding our proposals.

Time is working against us in another way -- through the development of science and technology.

Unfortunately, chemical weapons are not difficult to make in comparison with nuclear weapons. As more countries develop their chemical industries the potential for manufacturing chemical weapons will inevitably expand as well.

Moreover, the chemical warfare agents known today are relatively primitive. They were discovered largely by trial and error. But our knowledge of biochemistry is rapidly growing, and such information about the chemical processes in the human body provides in turn the ability to manipulate those processes. Thus, the invention of new and even more deadly types of chemical warfare agents become technically feasible.

As another example, there are chemicals which are present naturally in the body in small quantities, but which in larger amounts could be injurious. Advances in biotechnology make it possible to produce large quantities of such chemicals.

Finally, we are concerned about development of chemicals which could make existing protective equipment useless.

All of these disquieting developments have prompted my Government to try to accelerate the negotiations. Since 1983, we have taken a number of initiatives, including the introduction of a complete draft convention. On behalf of President Reagan, Vice-President George Bush has twice visited the Conference to stress the urgency of negotiating an effective ban of chemical weapons. We have explained our positions in detail and expressed our readiness to negotiate. And what has been the result? So far, not much. There is no sense of urgency. There is no spirit of problem-solving.

As I have argued today, the effective prohibition of chemical weapons is an urgent matter which should concern us all. Such weapons are not limited to the super-Powers or a handful of industrialized countries. In fact, the majority of chemical-weapon States are developing countries in the Middle East and Asia. It is in the developing world where chemical weapons have been used in recent

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

years and where the risk of use in the future is greatest. And it is precisely developing countries which are the most vulnerable and which can least afford to divert scarce resources to chemical defence. We cannot agree with those who argue that a ban on chemical weapons should somehow be dependent on progress in other matters before the conference or that it is a matter of interest to only a few countries.

I believe that an effective chemical weapons convention can be achieved. The disturbing trends mentioned earlier do not have to get out of hand. But it will require a new sense of urgency and dedication from all of us. The Conference cannot continue on a "business as usual" basis and expect to succeed.

What then is to be done? Let me offer some specific suggestions.

First, our work must be put on a more rational schedule. Under the present arrangements no serious negotiations take place between mid-August and late February. Almost half of each year is being wasted. No other international negotiation operates in such a fashion. Our experiments with a three-week session in January have not succeeded -- for a variety of reasons. A better way needs to be found. For this reason my delegation strongly supports the proposal for a six-week negotiating session in the autumn.

Understandably, a number of delegations have pointed to the difficulties such a schedule would pose for existing staffing patterns. Concern has been expressed that the benefits might not outweigh the costs. I believe that a more rational schedule would lead quickly to better results. Of course, there is no way to know in advance. But there is a way to ensure that negotiations do not move forward in the six months between August and February. If there is no negotiating session there will be no progress. Instead of following a course that will clearly not help to accelerate the negotiations, let us take an initiative to provide the framework for swifter progress.

The second suggestion for accelerating the negotiations is for the Conference to identify and focus on the truly pivotal issues. At times it seems that the negotiations have become entangled in a thicket of secondary issues. Each of these issues is important to at least one delegation. But solving these numerous complex issues one-by-one will not move the negotiations ahead very quickly. The Conference should concentrate its efforts on those issues which are the keys to progress. In every negotiation there are a few such issues. If progress can be made on these pivotal issues, momentum will build up and secondary issues will be resolved much more rapidly.

At the current stage of the negotiations, three issues seem to my delegation to be the keys to progress. One is the declaration of locations of chemical weapons stocks and chemical weapons production facilities. A second is how to ensure that chemical weapons are not produced under the guise of commercial chemical production. The third is what approach to take to challenge inspection. Today I will briefly recall the approach to each issue proposed in the United States draft convention (CD/500) and elaborated in the statement by my delegation on 23 August 1984.

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

Regarding the first issue, the United States has proposed that the locations of chemical weapons stocks and of chemical weapons production facilities be declared within 30 days after a State becomes a party to the convention. In our view this is essential for assessment of whether all stocks and facilities have been declared and thus for ensuring confidence in compliance. It is the key not only to assessing the initial declarations, but also to monitoring the declared stocks and facilities until they are destroyed.

On the second issue, the importance of ensuring that the chemical industry is not misused for chemical weapons purposes has been emphasized by Western, Socialist and Group of 21 delegations alike. The United States strongly supports the approach developed by the United Kingdom. Under this approach the level of verification would depend on the level of risk, and unnecessary interference in civil use of chemicals would be avoided.

As for the third issue, an effective compliance mechanism, including challenge inspection, is an essential safety net. It would supplement the system of routine verification, which should be the principal means for ensuring confidence in compliance. My Government, beginning with an assessment of the verification difficulties unique to chemical weapons and the dangers posed by undeclared stocks and sites, has taken the unprecedented step of proposing to open our country to mandatory inspection anywhere, any time. We are proud of this commitment: it was not an easy one to make. Yet it represents in our view the best and most effective way that we know of to deter possible violations -- by ensuring that suspect activities are promptly dealt with.

These, then, are my delegation's views on where the real problems lie. We would welcome the views of other delegations, so that the negotiations can be focused on the major obstacles to a convention.

The third suggestion for accelerating work on a chemical weapons ban is related to delegations' readiness to negotiate. This means establishing clear positions, responding constructively and promptly to proposals from others, and working co-operatively to develop new, mutually-acceptable solutions. This factor is something of a truism, but I feel compelled to underscore its fundamental importance, because this is perhaps the area of greatest disappointment for my delegation. The United States has established detailed positions. It has responded to numerous questions. And it has made clear that the United States proposals have not been presented on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis.

Unfortunately, the actions of the delegation of the Soviet Union give us the impression that the Soviet Union is not yet prepared to negotiate with the United States or others in this Conference. There is no point in speculating here about the reasons that may lie behind this unresponsiveness. The regrettable fact is that detailed substantive responses to proposals from us and others have not been made.

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

The Soviet delegation has not responded to major Western initiatives that have been before this Conference for a year or more. What is the Soviet response to the proposals made by the United Kingdom for ensuring non-production of chemical weapons? We do not know, although the basic approach was first presented two years ago. What is the Soviet response to the United States draft convention presented a year ago? It is whispered in the corridors that the Soviet delegation intends to ignore the United States draft. So it seems, but this can hardly be called negotiation.

The Soviet delegation has responded to the United States proposal for "open invitation" challenge inspection. But not constructively. Those who choose to criticize have a responsibility to present an equally effective alternative. But the Soviet delegation has not done so. Furthermore, it has rejected or ignored United States efforts to meet Soviet concerns and continues to misrepresent the United States proposal for propaganda purposes.

What my delegation is looking for is a problem-solving approach by our Soviet negotiating partners -- for evidence of a commitment to try to work out mutually-acceptable solutions that accommodate our concerns. The delegation of the Soviet Union would find that such a commitment to co-operation would be fully reciprocated.

This is no empty promise. My delegation is prepared to match words with deeds. Let me give some specific examples.

The United States delegation has explained in detail the reasons why the locations of chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities must be declared promptly for the convention to be effective. In an effort to meet the concerns expressed by the Soviet Union, the United States is willing to consider the possibility that a party could move its chemical weapons stocks before declaration from their original storage sites in combat units to regional depots.

Since only the regional depots -- and not the combat units -- would contain chemical weapons, only the locations of these depots would have to be declared. Thus, the locations of combat units would not be revealed. The locations of depots would be declared within 30 days after the convention enters into force for the State.

As a second example, with respect to destruction of chemical weapons, the Soviet delegation has insisted that a party be allowed to divert some chemicals to industrial uses. My delegation has not been in favour of this concept. The Soviet delegation has not made clear what would be diverted nor how the peaceful use of the chemical would be verified. However, in an effort to meet the concerns expressed by the Soviet Union, the United States is willing to explore in detail whether a mutually-acceptable solution can be developed which would permit diversion under effective verification.

As a third example, the issue of how to identify so-called "key precursors" has consumed considerable amounts of time and energy. The Soviet position has been that "objective criteria" must be agreed to before lists can be developed. My delegation and others have questioned whether criteria could be established

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

that were not subject to varying interpretation. The United States view has been that efforts should focus on the lists themselves, rather than on abstract and imprecise criteria. However, in an effort to meet the concerns expressed by the Soviet Union, the United States is willing to work in parallel on guidelines for the lists and on the lists themselves. In this way the interests of both sides could be accommodated.

The final example of our co-operative attitude is in the area of challenge inspection. My delegation believes strongly that mandatory, short-notice challenge inspection is essential for an effective chemical weapons ban. It is essential because of the difficulty in distinguishing between permitted and illicit production of chemicals and in establishing confidence that all declared stocks and sites are in fact all the stocks and sites there are.

However, as we have made clear on numerous occasions, we are willing to consider any counterproposal that is designed to meet our concerns. We have never insisted on retaining every jot and tittle of our convention: we have sought only to satisfy our security concerns. The collective efforts of this body may develop a better, more effective way of meeting these concerns, and we would welcome such a development. Furthermore, in an effort to meet concerns expressed by the Soviet delegation, let me state again that my delegation is prepared to explore means to ensure that all relevant facilities are subject to challenge inspection, regardless of whether they are privately or State-owned.

I began this statement with a fairly pessimistic assessment of the present state of affairs. I pointed out the increasing risk that the negotiations to ban chemical weapons completely will be overtaken by the spread of chemical weapons capabilities and by the emergence of completely new types of chemical weapons. For my Government these developments are compelling reasons to accelerate the work of the Conference on a complete and verifiable ban on chemical weapons.

How can we accelerate the negotiations? By adopting a problem-solving attitude. The four specific topics I mentioned a moment ago would be good places to start. My delegation is ready to work on them, as well as on all other aspects of the future agreement. Our hope is that all delegations are prepared to join us.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the United States for his statement.

Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to draw the attention of the Conference to the presence here this morning of Mr. Michael Shenstone, Deputy-Minister for Political Affairs and International Security of the Ministry of External Relations of Canada. I should like to welcome him to today's meeting both personally and on behalf of the Conference.

The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of France, Ambassador de la Gorce, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. de la GORCE (France) (translated from French): In four weeks' time the Conference is to close the spring part of its session. It is too early to establish a balance sheet, but we can draw some provisional conclusions. On the credit side we can enter the resumption of work on chemical disarmament, now being steadily pursued. This is the first time in its history that our Conference has been able to adopt its agenda and re-establish a subsidiary body responsible for vitally important negotiations a mere two days after the beginning of its session. This decision was taken without any precondition being established or any link being made with other issues. This is a very substantial step forward in our methods that fits in with the recommendations made last year by the informal group which examined means of enhancing the effectiveness of our work.

On the other hand, on other items, among the most sensitive on our agenda, our consultations have not yet led to decisions which would enable them to be considered in suitable conditions. I am thinking in particular of item 3, prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters, and item 5, prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Today I should like to make a few remarks on these two items.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is now a paramount concern of the international community. What is at stake for us is the preservation of the conditions of strategic stability, which guarantees security. Never before have we heard so many statements devoted entirely or partially to this issue, to which the French Government attaches the utmost importance. Its views have been presented to the Conference on various occasions, and in particular in the statement made in plenary on 12 June last year.

We note first of all that outer space is now being used for military purposes. This is something which is undoubtedly irreversible, and indeed has a positive side to it. This is the case of observation and communications satellites, which in fact help to maintain strategic stability. Other military uses of space, however, may have a destabilizing effect, and we consider that they should be strictly limited and controlled.

Anti-satellite weapons are a first example of this; the Soviet Union already has a system which can reach low-orbit satellites; the United States are developing another system. As it is practically impossible to distinguish between military satellites and satellites for civilian purposes, we consider that arrangements must be adopted to ensure the immunity of satellites, or at least of high-orbit satellites which are the most important for strategic stability.

It now appears, however, that new, tremendously far-reaching developments could call into question the present factors of equilibrium: the stationing of weapons in space; the deployment of new anti-satellite weapon systems; and the development of new defensive anti-ballistic systems, which could also be used against satellites.

The two major Powers are currently engaged in research in these areas. The research programme of the United States -- the Strategic Defence Initiative -- was the subject of a very valuable statement last week by our distinguished colleague of the United States. We note that the programme does not violate the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which permits research. The programme's purpose is to explore the possibility of an alternative to the present system of strategic equilibrium based

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

on nuclear deterrence. The French Government, however, cannot dispel a number of questions arising on the subject of this research. These questions refer in particular to the future of the 1972 Treaty, which remains one of the foundations of the strategic balance, to the degree of reliability of the new defensive systems, to possible counter-measures, and finally and above all to the risk of instability which could arise from calling into question the existing conditions of equilibrium, which is necessary to security.

In this connection, the main concern of the French Government is to maintain nuclear deterrence as an essential factor of that balance. In an address delivered in Helsinki on 23 March before the Paasikivi Society the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Roland Dumas, said the following: "France considers that nuclear deterrence is necessary for world peace, in particular in Europe. The recent crisis in military equilibria, which is not insurmountable, should not degenerate into a crisis of deterrence".

We note that the United States, like the Soviet Union, is planning to deploy new strategic weapon systems. This would appear to confirm, in our opinion, that nuclear deterrence remains valid, for a period whose duration cannot be determined.

Negotiations have begun in Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union. They concern both nuclear weapons and the prevention of the arms race in outer space. We attach great importance to these negotiations and hope that they will be successful. We note that there is an obvious relationship between the limitation of military uses of space and the efforts to restore the balance of offensive strategic forces of the two major Powers and substantially to reduce their levels.

These two Powers obviously have a primordial responsibility for the prevention of an arms race in outer space. However, their responsibility is not exclusive; it is a matter which directly concerns the entire international community, and that is why it is included in our agenda. Thus, for the first time our Conference is faced with the problem of the relationship to be established between bilateral action and multilateral action. In our opinion, this relationship should take the form of a serious discussion in the Conference of the various aspects of the subject, and some of the statements we have heard here mark the beginning of such a discussion. It should also take the form of suitable reports provided by the two negotiating Powers, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Finally, and above all, it should take the form of substantive work on issues of common interest which should be the subject of multilateral undertakings. The French delegation has proposed to this end the consideration of two specific issues: the limitation of anti-satellite systems, and the strengthening of the existing declaration arrangements established by the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space of 14 June 1975.

We keenly wish that the Conference may establish without delay the necessary ad hoc committee for such work. The consultations which have taken place suggest that an agreement is today within reach. The terms of the mandate will in any event make it possible to undertake the necessary initial work: the examination of existing agreements and of the gaps in the legal régime governing space is unquestionably a very useful preliminary stage. However, what is most important, in our opinion, is to take up as rapidly as possible the consideration of the proposals which have been tabled.

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

It is also the wish of the French delegation that the consultations underway on the methods for the consideration of agenda item 3 may be successful. We consider that the Conference on Disarmament is in fact the sole forum where a substantive debate can begin among government representatives on the "prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters."

We are aware of the difficulties of the subject and the differences which separate us. For many of us, the prevention of nuclear war as such is a specific problem, which must be considered in isolation from the problem of war in general and the balances on which security depends in some situations. Under this approach, the objective is to eliminate the nuclear factor. For us, the very wording of agenda item 3 covers all the security problems in the nuclear era, the "prevention of nuclear war" being necessarily linked to the entire set of political and military factors on which security depends.

The French delegation has repeatedly explained the reasons why the nuclear factor remains a fundamental condition of the strategic stability necessary to security. It has noted with interest that among the criticisms from a very wide range of sources voiced against the American Strategic Defence Initiative, one of the points most frequently advanced concerned the risk of destabilization which the SDI allegedly raises. We interpret this criticism as an implicit recognition of the stabilizing role of deterrence.

The nature of the questions raised by agenda item 3 and the diverging views which we note undoubtedly rule out the possibility of negotiations, at least on the aspects which fall within the specific responsibility of the nuclear Powers. However, the French delegation shares the legitimate concern of the international community with regard to these issues which are of major interest to all mankind. The joint consideration of this issue within the Conference therefore appears both useful and justified, and will, we hope, lead to a better understanding of the views of all sides and if possible to accept its conclusions regarding the conditions of security and of peace.

Mr. BUTLER (Australia): Mr. President, as a consequence of the rotational system of the Presidency of this Conference, I think we can presume that this will be the last plenary session of the Conference over which you will preside in March. May I therefore take this opportunity of saying how much my delegation has appreciated your skill and working under your guidance of the work of this Conference.

The subject of my intervention today is item 3 of our agenda, prevention of nuclear war.

The intrinsic importance of this subject is self-evident. The way in which we decide to deal with item 3 of our agenda will also bring us face to face with the question of the role and significance of the Conference on Disarmament itself.

Last year we debated, at great length, the inclusion of this subject in our agenda and the precise terms in which it should be formulated. The Conference decided that this item should be described accurately and completely, that is "Prevention of Nuclear War, including All Related Matters". But, having fought the battle for the agenda we then failed to carry out any substantive work under the item even though no one said they doubted the importance of the subject. My Government was disturbed by that failure and we do not want to see it repeated. This is our view not only because prevention of nuclear war is a subject on which we want to see work carried out but also because we believe failure to act on this subject would damage the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

This Conference was born of a decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations. That special session of the Assembly assigned to us the task of conducting multilateral disarmament negotiations. The General Assembly gave us an autonomous existence but there is not the slightest doubt that we operate under the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. That Charter enjoins all members of the United Nations "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest".

Now that injunction is deeply relevant to the work we must conduct under item 3 of our agenda. We must unite our strength to maintain the peace and security. We must ensure that armed force is not used. We must institute methods to that end - and these actions are given an importance greater than they have ever had, because of the existence of nuclear weapons.

Simply, "prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters" means that we must strive to eliminate nuclear weapons and in the meantime seek to prevent all war and by that means nuclear war.

The Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Bill Hayden, has expressed his convictions on the prevention of nuclear war very clearly. He said, "All Governments must be guided in their policies by a determination to prevent such a war ever starting. Everything which contributes to fending off the risk of war must be preserved and shored up. And everything possible must be done to promote agreements between the nuclear Powers and reduce tensions, and reduce the horrendously large stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The objective must be no less than the elimination of nuclear weapons and of war itself".

And that means, of course, conventional war. Regrettably, conventional war has been a recurrent feature of contemporary history.

Too often the Charter injunctions that international disputes should be settled by peaceful means, and that we should all refrain from the threat or use of force, have been violated. Such violations constitute a real failure and today raise the awful possibility of the transformation of conflict from conventional to nuclear war.

And it is this possibility which is the central danger of the nuclear age. Thus, we must develop the principles and mechanisms, referred to in the Charter, which will ensure that war does not occur and which will ensure that war with conventional weapons does not develop into a wider conflict leading to the introduction and use of nuclear weapons.

It is sometimes argued that the existence of nuclear weapons has in fact prevented nuclear war. It is irresistible to point out that, if there were no nuclear weapons, there could not be any concept of nuclear war. The distinguished American physicist Richard Garwin summed this up recently when he said, "If you want to eliminate the threat of ballistic missiles, then you must eliminate ballistic missiles". It is not insignificant that Dr. Garwin played a major role in the development of nuclear weapons.

It is too late to lament the development of nuclear weapons. They exist. The stable door is open, the horse has already bolted and is well over the hill, but we must bring it back.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

My Government's view on nuclear deterrence is that it is an unsatisfactory set of arrangements. But we are not so Utopian, or so thick, as to think that we can simply wish it out of existence. What is required is a deeply determined effort to negotiate radical reductions in the numbers and kinds of those weapons held in the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States and, ultimately, to eliminate nuclear weapons completely.

We recognize that such a result is the stated purpose of the negotiations which recently started again between the United States and the Soviet Union. We appreciate this and we wish them both well in their efforts. We know that such a result will be difficult to obtain and must be negotiated with the greatest care.

Agreements which are not balanced and verifiable and which might disturb global stability could bring down upon us the full disaster of the use of nuclear weapons. That disaster would be more far-reaching and is closer to us than was thought, even just a few years ago.

I am referring to the nuclear winter theory, the potential validity of which is being shored-up by repeated scientific studies. What is deeply disturbing about the concept of nuclear winter is the disproportionality which has emerged between the number of nuclear weapons in existence -- some 50,000 -- and the miniscule number which, if used, could cause a global climatic and ecological disaster. The rational response to this situation is to strive with an effort and sincerity, greater than ever before, to eliminate nuclear weapons.

For these reasons there can be no higher priority than for those who have the responsibility to do so, to negotiate in good faith, towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. While this process takes place, however, it is important that stability in the nuclear balance be preserved and it is important that principles and procedures designed to ensure that nuclear war does not occur be further developed.

Some such arrangements already exist on a bilateral basis but it is surely true that related and complementary arrangements can be developed multilaterally which would strengthen existing systems for the prevention of nuclear war.

The need to carry out this work has been emphasized by the General Assembly and by delegations to this Conference.

At the General Assembly last year, Australia voted for resolution No. 39/148 P, tabled by Argentina and others, which gave expression to the need for multilateral action for the prevention of nuclear war. We were sufficiently satisfied by the terms of that resolution to be able to vote for it, but we did not in fact believe that the approach contained in that resolution was the only or exhaustive one.

Under these circumstances we joined with a number of other Member States of the United Nations in sponsoring a draft resolution, Document L.40, on the same subject. That resolution was never put to a vote because some other Member States sought to destroy it through a process of amendment which would simply have turned L.40 on its head. We deeply regretted that action not only because it constituted something like an act of censorship, but also because the logical extension of that action was to imply that one group of Member States alone would determine the mind of the General Assembly on an issue of such importance and in which we all have a vital interest.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

My Government had decided to co-sponsor draft resolution L.40 for the very good reason that it was based squarely on the principles of the Charter and this was made clear in our interventions on the occasion of the tabling of the draft resolution and when it had to be withdrawn.

Last week the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany introduced into this Conference a paper which sought, again, to give expression to concerns under agenda item 3 as seen from the perspective of a major Western country. That Paper also proposed some new and imaginative approaches towards getting work started on this subject in our Conference. My delegation believes that the approach embodied in the Federal German Paper deserves the earnest and considered attention of all of us.

Prevention of nuclear war is not a subject on which we should be divided. It is one which demands a great effort of co-operation. One of the actions provided for in the resolution tabled at the last General Assembly by Argentina was that the Secretary-General of the United Nations should invite Member States to express their views on the terms of the Argentine resolution.

My Government has done so in a communication to the Secretary-General and, as we all know, the Secretary-General will be submitting to this Conference a report on the replies he has received. Presumably the Australian reply will form a part of that report. Nevertheless, because we are currently addressing the question of how to organize our work under item 3 I have taken the step of asking you, as President of our Conference, to circulate as a document of this Conference the substantive portion of the Australian reply to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and that document has been issued in one working language, today, as document CD/581.

That reply sets forth, in some detail, my Government's approach to the issue of prevention of nuclear war and I hope it will be helpful to the Conference to see that approach now, in the form of a document of the Conference. The circulation of that document also makes it unnecessary for me to outline in detail in this statement the Australian approach to this subject. We hope instead that delegations may study document CD/581.

This Conference has the ability to organize its work in whatever way it chooses. The point of my intervention today has been to urge the Conference to establish an appropriate means for ensuring that practical work under item 3 of our agenda is carried out this year, and that work should start as soon as possible.

Prevention of nuclear war is not an East-West issue, it involves us all and this Conference is unique in bringing together representatives of the whole international community, East and West and North and South, and there is nothing to fear from entering into substantive work on this item, that is assuming that one is not afraid of hearing opposing or contrary views and opinions.

But there is a lot to fear however from refusing to do this work. The world community must make the arrangements necessary to ensure that nuclear war never occurs and there is also the need to defend this Conference and its role. Both of these ends will only be achieved if we agree to all this and allows the Conference to do its job.

Mr. ROSE (German Democratic Republic): Mr. President, public awareness of the risks involved in the militarization of outer space has grown considerably in the last few years. Everywhere in the world, people are demanding that outer space not be turned into a new sphere of confrontation and competitive armament. It should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes, that is, for the benefit of mankind. Therefore, the world places high hopes in the new Soviet-United States negotiations, whose declared aim -- the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its termination on Earth -- enjoys extremely wide support.

The Conference on Disarmament should make a specific contribution to the struggle to prevent an arms race in outer space. What we need is a parallel bilateral and multilateral approach to that vital issue: firstly, because the extension of the arms race to outer space poses a threat to the security of all peoples and endangers their inalienable right to use space for peaceful purposes; secondly, because the two States with the greatest space capability are not the only ones in a position to utilize outer space today, and the number of countries with a space capability is certain to rise in the years to come; and finally because a series of States with an advanced level of technological development in the utilization of outer space has reached the threshold where they could, objectively speaking, use outer space for military ends.

All this underlines how urgent it is to arrive at international agreements to halt the efforts to militarize outer space. In accordance with resolution 39/59 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament should thus no longer procrastinate, and should instead commence its work on agenda item 5 within the framework of an ad hoc committee.

In order for us to be able to tackle our task with a chance of succeeding, it would be extremely helpful if we could agree on general starting points.

First, what we must recognize above all is that the extension of the arms race to outer space does not consist in a spatial dimension alone. Rather, it goes hand in hand with the development of a new class of weapons, which could be used both for offensive and defensive purposes. The creation of such weapons could only be likened to the appearance of nuclear arms.

Second, what should be realized, too, is that the militarization of outer space envisaged by the United States Administration must be interpreted as a crucial element in the plans to obtain a nuclear first-strike capability. I will come back to that aspect later on in my statement.

Third, equating the militarization of outer space with its current military use, thus belittling the gravity of the problem, can certainly not be regarded as helpful. The militarization of outer space would not only be characterized by a tremendous increase in the number of military operations in outer space but also by the deployment of weapons capable of destroying targets both in space and on Earth.

Finally, we should awaken to the fact that there is no automatic mechanism between research and new scientific and technological findings on the one hand and their military application on the other. It always requires a political decision, whatever the case may be. So, it was not the pressure of science that has made the United States subordinate virtually all its space research to military plans.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

Rather, the driving force behind it has been and still is the ambition to gain military and strategic superiority and the ideologically rooted disbelief in the ability of the other side to meet the challenge.

What is advertised as the dawn of a new future is utterly reactionary in nature. The advances in science and technology have long been pressing for action to make peace lasting through disarmament based on equality and equal security. The application of the latest scientific and technological findings calls for peaceful co-operation among States. Obsessed with traditional imperialist power politics, certain forces are seeking to outwit this historical necessity for the benefit of arms-manufacturing corporations, that is, to the detriment of peoples and countries.

The Joint Communiqué issued on 21 March 1985 after the visit of my country's Foreign Minister to the Soviet Union contains the following passage of relevance to our topic: "The plans to militarize outer space, as announced by Washington, pose a serious threat to mankind. If these aggressive plans were carried out, an unchecked arms race would invariably be triggered in all spheres, and any limitation, not to speak of reductions, of strategic offensive weapons would be rendered impossible, and the risk of nuclear war would dramatically increase." The only acceptable alternative is greater security for States by preventing an arms race in outer space and terminating it on Earth.

Time is pressing, for the broad lines of the militarization of outer space are already becoming visible. They consist in the development of novel offensive satellite weapons and space shuttle systems for military payloads and in massive research, development and testing of anti-satellite and anti-ballistic missile systems.

Allow me to revert to the real purpose of the so-called Strategic Defence Initiative. This name has been chosen to camouflage the true nature of the matter. As we have heard, the champions of armaments in space claim that space weapons would lessen the risk of war and provide more security, since they would make the possession of nuclear arms superfluous. To illustrate this approach the United States House of Representatives has just decided to build 21 additional MX missiles. People are to be led to believe that the new weapons under the SDI would be directed exclusively against arms and not against man. However, this claim does not stand up to close examination. But let the facts speak for themselves: The supposedly defensive system, popularly known as the "Star Wars" system, could serve several major offensive functions. It is commonly recognized that it could be used as a defensive adjunct to an offensive nuclear attack, allowing nuclear-armed missiles to be launched in an offensive strike, while the defence is held in reserve to cope with any retaliatory strike; it could attack and destroy space satellites, which are far easier targets than ballistic missiles; and this system could unleash lightning-fast offensive strikes from space against relatively "soft" ground targets such as planes, oil tankers, power plants and grain fields, causing instantaneous fires and damage that could, in the words of one proponent of the system, "take an industrialized country back to ~~an~~ eighteenth century level in 30 minutes".

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

The assumption has also been made that the so-called strategic defence system might ultimately prove able to destroy the concrete and steel silos that protect missiles underground, thus providing a first-strike weapon that could disable an opponent's missile before it could be fired.

The weapons we are talking about are destined to be another element of an assured first-strike capability, which is the centrepiece of an attack-oriented nuclear strategy. The doctrine of the "assured destruction of the enemy" is to be complemented by the doctrine of the "assured survival of the attacker". This in effect, is the crux of the matter.

The plans and the research work for such an attack system in outer space are enough to produce by themselves a destabilizing effect, not to mention the consequences which the development and deployment of such arms would have. In this context, a question inevitably arises: Why is a new jump in armaments of unprecedented dimensions required, if one has set oneself the aim, as laid down in the Joint Soviet-American Statement, to eliminate nuclear arms once and for all? We are still waiting for a convincing answer from the "Star Wars" strategists.

The Joint Statement of 8 January stresses the indivisible interrelationship between the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons down to their complete elimination. We are being made to believe that nuclear disarmament could be achieved while the "Star Wars" plans are being carried out. But since time immemorial, humanity has known the interaction between means of attack and means of defence, which, by the way, furnished the basis for the SALT process and ultimately led to the conclusion of the ABM Treaty. This basic consensus must not be left aside. The development of space-based anti-ballistic missile systems will result in an enormous acceleration of the arms race in all types of weaponry. The consequence would be an increasing risk of war and truly astronomical expenditures in terms of material and intellectual resources. Any going back on the aforementioned basic consensus is bound to undermine the international treaties concluded on the basis of that consensus.

If the arms race in outer space is to be nipped in the bud, research and development in the space weapons field must be prohibited. The proponents of space armament are trying to divorce research from development and testing. This approach is misleading. A closer look at the proposed anti-ballistic missile and anti-satellite systems reveals that their development follows two scientific-technological paths, which have partly left the stage of research already. Tests of those systems are scheduled for the near future. The term "technology demonstrations" has been invented to disguise the fact that they violate the ABM Treaty.

One of the paths is the development of various types of detection equipment, of computers, and of nuclear and non-nuclear interception systems. The other path pursued is the development of totally new kinds of laser, particle-beam and other weapons. At a particular point in time, the two paths of development are to be fused together.

(Mr. Rose, German Democratic Republic)

What is more, nobody can seriously believe that billions of dollars are invested in research activities, without their results being used for the development, production and deployment of pertinent weapon systems. For this reason, it was but a logical consequence for the United States Administration expressly to commission a "research and development programme" on 23 March 1983. Only naive people can console themselves with the supposed readiness to share the research findings with the other side. Anyone who puts simple ballbearings on an embargo list today is definitely not willing to make available to his alleged enemy his latest and most expensive technology for "future use". But this is not the real problem; what is imperative is to agree on the immediate stop of any research into those weapons. Other countries which volunteer money and research capacity for the militarization of outer space in the belief that they might derive technological benefits from such a step place a heavy responsibility on themselves. Would not precisely the peaceful use of outer space open new horizons for the scientific and technological progress of all countries?

The political decision to do research into space weapons and to develop them must be reversed and turned into the resolve to keep space free of weapons. Such a step would require an agreement to prohibit space-based anti-satellite and anti-ballistic missile systems, as well as all types of ground-launched, air-launched and sea-launched weaponry designed to destroy targets in space. What is needed, in other words, is the conclusion of verifiable treaties to prevent an arms race in outer space. Given political will, we are convinced that the issue of verification can be solved adequately.

Since the moment the prevention of an arms race in outer space was placed on the agenda of our Conference, a host of interesting suggestions have been made and initiatives undertaken by various countries. It was the Soviet Union that put forward the most comprehensive proposals. Just take the two draft treaties submitted to the Conference in 1981 and 1983, respectively. One aims at the prohibition of the stationing of weapons of any kind in outer space, and the other seeks to ban the use of force in outer space and from space against the Earth.

In his statement last Tuesday, the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union, Ambassador Issraelyan, expounded the far-reaching concepts of his country. It must be regretted that these thoughts cannot yet be the subject of negotiations conducted within the framework of an ad hoc committee of the Conference.

It is common practice for treaty negotiations to be started with a discussion of what is already there, with an analysis of the proposals made so far and with a definition of the issues to be resolved in the process of negotiation. But this is not sufficient. Nor is it the most important thing. What is important, however, is to reach agreement on concrete and effective measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. The most direct way to go about it is the drafting of relevant treaties. This is what my delegation considers to be the most important task of our Conference.

Mr. MONSHEMVULA (Zaire) (translated from French): Mr. President, for me, it is a privilege and a real pleasure to be taking part for the first time in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, on behalf of the Zairian delegation as well as on my own behalf, I wish to offer you my sincere and warm congratulations on the occasion of your election to the presidency of the Conference. Your election to the presidency is a tribute to your personal merits, your competence and your long diplomatic experience which enabled you to successfully conduct the requisite negotiations throughout the current month of March.

I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Donald Lowitz of the United States of America, who presided over the negotiations throughout the month of February with skill, competence and tact.

I wish to congratulate Ambassador Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. My delegation is sure that he will continue to use his political and diplomatic talents to promote the success of the Conference.

I also wish to join the previous speakers in welcoming the new representatives of Nigeria, Kenya and Mongolia.

The delegation of Zaire will hold itself fully and constantly available with a view to seeking, in conjunction with all the members of the Conference, mutually acceptable solutions to the problem of disarmament.

By establishing the United Nations, the Governments and States of the world expressed their resolve to unite. A fundamental requirement for the achievement of this unity is the definition, recognition and observance of the inalienable rights of individuals, communities and peoples. If these fundamental and universally recognized principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations are ever disregarded for power-seeking motives, we will be heading straight for a new international conflagration in which the use of nuclear weapons would destroy all life on this Earth. Since its establishment, the United Nations has been endeavouring to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, the settlement of dispute by peaceful means and co-operation among all States regardless of their social, economic and political systems.

The objectives of the Conference on Disarmament are based on all of those considerations.

The Conference on Disarmament is being held at a particularly difficult time in which the world is in the throes of a triple crisis: an economic crisis, a crisis of civilization and a crisis of conscience. The international community is experiencing the most serious economic crisis since the 1930s. North-South relations have been thrown into a state of perpetual imbalance.

(Mr. Monshemvula, Zaire)

My country, Zaire, forms part of the African continent which has rightly been declared a disaster zone since it is being devastated by famine, drought, malnutrition, poverty, sickness -- in short, by underdevelopment. Our prime concern is not to make war or conquer space, but rather to save human lives. Only the other day, on 11 and 12 March, the Conference on the Emergency Situation on Africa was held in accordance with resolution 39/29 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 3 December 1984. In the show of solidarity displayed during that Conference, we were very happy to note that the most substantial contribution was announced by the United States of America, one of the nuclear super-Powers and the economic giant of our time. This is adequate proof of the fact that the right to life and survival is deeply rooted in the conscience of all the nations on our planet.

The Conference on Disarmament constitutes the only multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. It is responsible for the successful conduct of negotiations aimed at the formulation of draft agreements on various aspects of disarmament. To this end, ad hoc committees with negotiating mandates must be established under each agenda item.

Accordingly, my delegation welcomes the re-establishment, during this session, of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons with the task of continuing the comprehensive and complete process of negotiations and preparing a draft convention on chemical weapons. This Committee, which is presided over by Ambassador Turbanski of Poland, has already made considerable progress, during the last session, under the competent direction of Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden. It is our fervent hope that the few remaining difficulties will be overcome, since the Convention to be concluded in this respect must comprise all the necessary provisions, including those relating to verification and compliance.

The Conference has before it document CD/544 of 5 February 1985 in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations transmitted to the President of our Conference numerous resolutions that were adopted at the thirty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly and which entrust certain specific tasks to the Conference. At the same time, he also transmitted a number of our resolutions relating to questions of disarmament. Under the terms of operative paragraph 3 of resolution 39/65 B, the General Assembly urged the Conference on Disarmament to intensify the negotiations in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons with a view to achieving accord on a chemical weapons convention for submission to the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

It is obvious that all States without distinction, and primarily the two super-Powers, must exhibit a stronger political will to overcome the political obstacles and ~~suceed~~ succeed in drafting a universally acceptable convention during the present session.

We also warmly welcome the re-establishment of the Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, presided over by Ambassador García Robles.

My country, Zaire, is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and, consequently, of the Group of 21.

(Mr. Monshemvula, Zaire)

Disarmament and denuclearization are among the permanent objectives and most prominent aspects of the struggle of the Non-Aligned Movement. It will be remembered that the tenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was convened at the request of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

My delegation reaffirms its support for all the resolutions on disarmament that have so far been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

While recognizing the tremendous task that has been accomplished by the United Nations, pursuant to its Charter, in regard to the maintenance of peace and the security of States, we cannot ignore the existence of many local conflicts which have devastated a large number of regions throughout the world and left millions of victims since the establishment of the Organization in June 1945.

The future of mankind as a whole is being jeopardized by the nuclear-arms race. In his message read before this Conference by his Personal Representative Ambassador Komatina, the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressed his deep concern at the lack of progress in the field of disarmament.

The Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum to find solutions within the context of a comprehensive and coherent approach to the problem of disarmament. Consequently, all States members of the Conference must work together with a view to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

All the States of the world, regardless of whether or not they possess nuclear weapons, are today the potential victims of a nuclear holocaust. There is a need for a treaty aimed at the prohibition of all tests of nuclear weapons. The General Assembly of the United Nations refers us to its resolution 39/52 in which it reiterated once again its grave concern that nuclear-weapon testing was continuing unabated, against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations. It also reaffirmed its conviction that such a treaty was a matter of the highest priority.

The responsibility for the conclusion of such a treaty lies primarily with the two super-Powers and the other nuclear-weapon Powers.

It is with regret that my delegation notes that all the endeavours made at the Conference with a view to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on this question have been to no avail.

We wish to commend all the parallel initiatives aimed at finding a solution to the problem of disarmament. Accordingly, we endorse the Delhi Declaration of 28 January 1985 made by the Heads of State or Government of Argentina, Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and Tanzania, contained in document CD/549. In that Declaration, the six Heads of State or Government called upon all nations and individuals throughout the world to collaborate for the purposes of disarmament in the face of the frantic nuclear arms race. In this connection, I would like to quote the following extracts from that important declaration:

(Mr. Monshemvula, Zaire)

"As a result of recent atmospheric and biological studies, there have been new findings which indicate that in addition to blast, heat and radiation, nuclear war, even on a limited scale, would trigger an arctic nuclear winter which may transform the Earth into a darkened, frozen planet posing unprecedented peril to all nations, even those far removed from the nuclear explosions. We are convinced that this makes it still more pressing to take preventive action to exclude forever the use of nuclear weapons and the occurrence of a nuclear war".

We also warmly welcome the Soviet-American initiative of 8 January concerning the commencement of negotiations on 12 March in connection with space and nuclear weapons. We hope that the endeavours made at that bilateral level and within the context of this Conference will be mutually complementary.

Like the high seas, outer space constitutes the common heritage of mankind and, in accordance with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, should therefore be used solely for peaceful purposes to ensure scientific and technical progress for the benefit of all. The Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space should be applied strictly. The General Assembly has assigned to the Conference the task of studying, as a matter of priority, the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

My delegation wishes to express concern at the fact that, while the first part of the Conference's session is drawing to an end, due consideration has not yet been given to the establishment of an ad hoc committee. We appeal to all members of the Conference and, in particular, to the nuclear Powers to make every effort to reach an agreement as soon as possible. It is absolutely imperative that all members should participate actively in the negotiations, bearing in mind the recommendations of the tenth and twelfth special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The delegation of Zaire welcomes the convening in Cairo on 9 to 13 February of the Regional Conference on Disarmament which was organized by the United Nations within the context of the World Disarmament Campaign.

All governments should give greater support to the efforts of the United Nations in pursuit of the objectives of the World Disarmament Campaign with a view to informing and educating the public and promoting a better understanding of the question of disarmament and arms limitation.

The items on the agenda of the Regional Conference included the implementation of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. The delegation of Zaire invites the members of the Conference to work actively for the implementation of the provisions of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 39/61 A and B.

Another factor that should be borne in mind by delegations is the link between disarmament and development. A large part of the resources that mankind is currently wasting on the arms race should be allocated to development with a view to reducing the deplorable gap between North and South.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its conviction that it is within the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, that all acceptable solutions to the problem of disarmament should be sought with a view to saving present and future generations from the scourge of war. For the last time, we earnestly appeal to all delegations in the Conference to make every endeavour and to manifest the political will needed to reach agreement on the establishment of the various ad hoc committees under the other items on the agenda of this session. My delegation notes with satisfaction the declaration by the Chinese delegation concerning

(Mr. Monshemvula, Zaire)

its willingness to reconsider its position and to participate in the work of the ad hoc committee to be established under agenda item 1, in the event of that committee being actually established.

To avoid war, the ultimate objective of the Conference is, and will remain, general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Thus, by avoiding war, we can safeguard all human rights relating to the essential dignity of human beings, the exercise of their freedoms, their relations with other persons and their full human dimension.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Zaire for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President.

The next speaker is the distinguished representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Issraelyan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation has asked for the floor today in order to exercise its right of reply. We had not intended to speak on the subject of the prohibition of chemical weapons -- we propose to make a separate statement on it shortly -- but we should like to comment on the statement made by our colleague, Ambassador Lowitz of the United States. This is not the first time I have heard an American statesman speak on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons. It has become a sort of fashion for United States representatives to refer in their statements to various alleged cases of utilization of chemical weapons. Vice-President Bush did so in 1983, Mr. Adelman, the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency did so in 1985, our colleague Ambassador Lowitz is doing so today. But in each of these cases the speaker has for some reason "forgotten" to mention that it is the United States of America which, in the whole post-war period, was the country that used toxic chemicals most widely and massively for an entire decade at the time of the war in Viet Nam. That was a gross violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We shall systematically recall this when such "omissions" are made in statements by United States representatives.

As my colleagues know, I am not given to quoting myself. But on this occasion I should like to recall that speaking on another topic in this room two days ago I said that ignorance of facts, ignorance of a question's history, is not to the speaker's credit, and if he knows the facts and distorts them, then that is all the worse for him. Today I have been surprised by some of my United States colleague's assertions. For example, I quote: "What is the Soviet response to the United States draft convention presented a year ago? It is whispered in the corridors that the Soviet delegation intends to ignore the United States draft". Well, first of all, my advice to the United States delegation is not to listen to rumours; they are not the best source of information; it would do better to read the Conference records. If the United States delegation and its experts had done so, they would probably have been able to recollect that last year we spoke three times -- three times -- about the United States draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. To substantiate my remarks and help the United States experts to avoid referring to rumours and glance at the documents instead, let me give the dates: 26 April, 24 July and 9 August 1984. Does the United States delegation perhaps think that statements about their draft convention should be made every week or at every meeting? That is something we shall not do. We shall not do it simply because we do not think that this particular draft deserves such attention. Three times is quite enough.

Ambassador Lowitz said: "The Soviet delegation has responded to the United States proposal for 'open invitation' challenge inspection. But not constructively." A question arises in my mind: the United States delegation seems to think that the only possible reaction to a United States proposal is enthusiastic approval, a storm of

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

applause, unconditional acceptance. No, we have not and will not react in such a way, not because this is a United States proposal but because we adopt a serious and critical approach to any proposal. Those proposals which are really constructive and acceptable we accept, and in the case of those which are unacceptable to us we explain our motives in the most detailed manner possible. Let me recall once more that such comments were made by us in connection with the United States proposal concerning "open invitation" challenge inspection and that they can be read on pages 6 to 11 of the Russian text of document CD/PV.280. An English text certainly exists as well. Anyone can look and see why the Soviet delegation cannot accept this United States proposal.

And now my last point. The United States delegation has made an attempt to represent the United States position as being very flexible and constructive and going halfway to meet the positions of other delegations, including the Soviet Union, and the Soviet position as being rigid, stubborn and uncompromising. Is this really so, gentlemen? After all, in politics a State's position is judged not on the basis of self-advertisement but of comparison and of analysis of the development of the attitude of the State in question. And if you compare the position of the United States on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons in 1984 with, say, the position it adopted during the bilateral negotiations in 1976-1980 or even in 1983, you will see it has become more rigid, more unyielding and more unacceptable to many States, including the Soviet Union. Take, for example, the famous proposal on "open invitation" challenge inspection. On the other hand, I challenge any delegation to consider the Soviet Union's and other socialist countries' 1972 draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, the 1982 Soviet draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, the way our position has moved forward to meet that of other delegations, including the delegation of the United States of America, and they will see whose position is flexible and whose position is unyielding. After all, we have to try to move towards one another, not away from each other. That is the ABC of diplomacy. Those are facts, and facts, Mr. President, are stubborn things, even in diplomacy.

The United States representative also said: "What my delegation is looking for is a problem-solving approach by our Soviet negotiating partners -- for evidence of a commitment to try to work out mutually acceptable solutions that accommodate our concerns". I understand Mr. Lowitz has in mind, so to speak, "mutually acceptable solutions" -- an approach which, so to speak, would be designed to "accommodate interest and concerns of all States participating in negotiations". We agree. That has always been our position. If the United States delegation will really follow such a course, then, I think, there will be progress in negotiations.

Mr. President, I simply cannot refrain from taking the opportunity (I am afraid you will not give me the floor again) to express to you my great gratitude for your work. I hope to see you again at tomorrow's meeting of the Conference, but I do not think there will be any further need for me to exercise the right of reply. I want to wish you bon voyage and to thank you. In April you will no longer be here and probably you will have forgotten all about the Conference. I believe you have done good and useful work, and the Soviet delegation will always remember you as the smiling, optimistic President of the Conference, the representative of Venezuela and our mutual friend. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union for his statement and for his kind words. There are no more speakers on my list for today. I give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador Carasales.

Mr. CARSALES (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): I have asked for the floor in order to refer to the statement made a week ago by the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador Lowitz. At the plenary meeting a week ago, he addressed item 3 of our agenda, "prevention of nuclear war". Among other things, he referred to the treatment of the issue of the prevention of nuclear war at the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly. In particular, he made critical remarks on two points: resolution 39/148 P and the submission of amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/39/L.40/Rev.1.

As I understand it, the latter point will be dealt with in a future statement by another delegation. Consequently, I shall confine myself to referring to the first of these aspects, resolution 39/148 P. I am obliged to do this not only because my delegation co-sponsored this draft resolution -- together with, I must add, the delegations of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Sudan, Uruguay, Venezuela and Yugoslavia -- but also because I had the honour of introducing it on behalf of the co-sponsors, as the Ambassador of Australia recalled this morning, in the course of the work of the General Assembly's First Committee.

That is why my delegation cannot remain silent in the face of certain remarks by the representative of the United States. He said that resolution 39/148 P "failed to address adequately the security needs of my country, and its co-sponsors showed no interest in developing compromise language".

In that connection, let us leave aside the question of whether draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly must as a matter of principle take into account the security needs of each and every one of the member States of the United Nations.

In this specific case that we are considering, and leaving aside the other issue, I confess that I can see no relationship between the text of resolution 39/148 P and the security needs of any country in particular. It is a resolution of a clearly procedural nature, based for the most part on resolutions adopted in earlier years by the General Assembly on this same issue.

I would venture to draw the attention of representatives to the text of resolution 39/148 P which is contained in document CD/544 of this Conference. The resolution has 12 preambular and six operative paragraphs. I am tempted to quote them one by one in order to underscore the moderation of the language used; but do not be alarmed, for I shall not do so. But I shall recall a few of them. I could begin with the first preambular paragraph, which states that the General Assembly is "alarmed by the threat to the survival of mankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the continuing nuclear-arms race". Does this statement jeopardize anyone's security?

The second preambular paragraph adds: "Deeply concerned by an increased danger of nuclear war as a result of the intensification of the nuclear-arms race and the serious deterioration of the international situation". Again, I wonder whether this statement jeopardizes anyone's security.

The next, or third, paragraph states: "Conscious that removal of the threat of nuclear war is the most acute and urgent task of the present day". Does this statement jeopardize anyone's security?

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

The time available to us is very short, and therefore I shall forego referring to the following preambular paragraphs, but I invite all delegations to read them and see if in any of them there is anything damaging to the security interests of any country.

Let us go on to the presumably more important paragraphs, the operative ones. The first "notes with regret that despite the fact that the Conference on Disarmament has discussed the question of the prevention of nuclear war for two years, it has been unable even to establish a subsidiary body to consider appropriate and practical measures to prevent it". Is what is stated in this paragraph not a fact? In what measure can this be harmful to anyone's security?

The second operative paragraph "again requests the Conference 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 and to establish for that purpose an ad hoc committee on the subject at the beginning of its 1985 session". Is this not what the Group of 21 and indeed a broad section of the international community have been asking for for many years? It is well known that this procedural approach is not shared by some delegations, but would the security interests of any State really be undermined by a process which in any event must necessarily enjoy the consensus of all the countries concerned?

The third operative paragraph "expresses its conviction that in view of the urgency of this matter and the inadequacy or insufficiency of existing measures, it is necessary to devise suitable steps to expedite effective action for the prevention of nuclear war". Could anyone disagree with the assertion contained in this paragraph?

Paragraphs 4 and 5, which I shall not quote, are confined to requesting governments to submit their views on this matter to the Secretary-General, and requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the subject.

Finally, the last paragraph decides to include the item in the General Assembly's agenda for its next session.

In view of these elements which I have recalled, and others which I could add, I must confess that sincerely I cannot see how the content of a resolution of a procedural nature, which carefully avoids entering into the substance of the issue of prevention of nuclear war, can be judged as jeopardizing the security interests of the United States or any other country. And here perhaps I should open a parenthesis, as there have been references to the draft resolution L.40 which was submitted to the General Assembly. I must point out that that draft did indeed take up substantive issues and was in nature utterly different from the draft which later became resolution 39/148 P, which is, as I have stressed, of an exclusively procedural character. I therefore repeat that I cannot see how the content of a resolution of a procedural nature which does not go into the substance of the matter can be considered as harming the security needs of the United States or any other country. It is perhaps not superfluous to mention that resolution 39/148 P was adopted by 130 votes in favour, including that of Australia, as the Australian Ambassador recalled this morning, with 6 against and 12 abstentions.

Furthermore, the wording of the resolution and the manner in which it refers to issues of universal interest raise the question of what points could have been the subject of compromise language. In any event, no such language was proposed to my delegation on that occasion.

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

Finally, and in view of the fact that this will perhaps be my last statement in a plenary meeting of this Conference under your presidency, I should like also to express the satisfaction with which my delegation has watched you preside over the work of this Conference, and my congratulations on the work you have accomplished, which I consider extremely effective and energetic, and to add my personal wishes for a speedy return to Geneva.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Argentina for his statement and for his kind words. I give the floor to the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. SHAHABI SIRJANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Thank you, Mr. President. In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

It is a pleasant opportunity for me to reiterate the pleasure of my delegation in seeing the representative of a friendly country, Venezuela, leading the work of this unique and highly respected Conference on Disarmament.

In my last intervention, on 14 March 1985, I drew the attention of the distinguished members and observers in the Conference to another escalation in the use of chemical weapons by Iraq on the war front. On that occasion I presented the request of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to all governments, and particularly to those present in this Conference, who can provide assistance to victims of the use of chemical weapons, to declare their willingness to do so in respect of the victims of such recent use. Fortunately, the request of my Government has been met in a manner deserving warm appreciation and today more than 30 Iranian victims of the use of chemical weapons are under treatment in a number of European countries. In this regard, our special thanks go to the Governments of Austria, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom, who have accepted a large number of the victims.

I should also thank a number of governments who have clearly and strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in the past few days and today. However, it is regrettable that in the course of the past few days two of the victims of chemical weapons have died due to the extreme severity of their conditions, and one more is under intensive care in a hospital in Europe.

The examination of the victims and the post mortem examinations of the dead in European hospitals have made very clear indications of the extensive use of highly lethal chemical agents, including the blistering agent known as mustard gas, against Iranian forces.

In respect of the recent escalation in the use of chemical weapons and other violations of international agreements by Iraq, the Secretary-General of the United Nations made a statement early this week and I would refer to the relevant part of it, which states that the Secretary-General is dismayed that a moratorium on attacks on purely civilian areas has not been observed, that attacks on unarmed merchant shipping persist and that international civil aviation in the area is under threat. He strongly urges both sides to put an end to such action.

(Mr. Shahabi Sirjani, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The Secretary-General abhors in particular the use of chemical weapons in the course of these hostilities. Information emanating from medical sources in Vienna and London indicate that such use has recurred. As he had stated on previous occasions, the Secretary-General condemned the use of chemical weapons wherever and whenever this may occur. The appeal that he issued to ensure the strict observance of the Geneva Protocol still stands.

It is our desire and hope that adoption of appropriate positions and measures on the part of those Governments who have genuine and scrupulous support for the maintenance and preservation of the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons in war would diminish and remove further gross violations of the Protocol to the benefit of all mankind.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I think that there are no more speakers who wish to take the floor this morning.

As you know, we had the intention of holding an informal meeting immediately after this plenary meeting. I have been informed that despite the hour it would be best to proceed with our informal meeting as planned. I therefore suggest that we briefly suspend the plenary meeting long enough to allow unauthorized persons to leave the Conference Room, and I would request representatives to remain in their places so that we can begin the informal meeting immediately. The plenary meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.50 p.m. and reconvened at 12.55 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The plenary meeting is resumed.

The Conference has before it Working Paper CD/WP.171 concerning the request received from Switzerland to participate in the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons and in the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The secretariat has also circulated today at my request the time-table of meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies for next week. The time-table was drawn up in consultation with the incoming President and with the Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committees. I should like to point out that Friday, 5 April, and Monday, 8 April, are official holidays of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Consequently, conference services will be available only in exceptional circumstances. As always, the time-table is purely indicative and subject to change if necessary. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the time-table.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As you know, intensive consultations have been held over the last few days on the possibility of proceeding as rapidly as possible to set up an ad hoc committee on agenda item 5. It would seem that these consultations have reached a point at which a concrete result may be envisaged, and some members have expressed interest in convening an informal meeting of the Conference to be followed by a plenary meeting tomorrow, Friday, 29 March, at 11.30 a.m. On that occasion I shall also report to the Conference on the consultations which have been held on other agenda items, and make my closing statement at the end of my term as President. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference agrees to convene an informal meeting followed by a plenary meeting of the Conference tomorrow at 11.30 a.m.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As there is no further business, I now intend to adjourn the plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Friday, 29 March, immediately after the informal meeting scheduled for 11.30 a.m. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.