

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE NINE HUNDRED AND TENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 August 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Volker Heinsburg (Germany)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 910th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. At the outset, I would like to review the timetable of meetings for next week. In this connection, I would like to recall the decision on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, contained in document CD/1036. According to paragraph 4, the Conference shall have two plenary meetings in the twenty-first and twenty-second weeks of the session. Next week is the twenty-first week of the session and, at this stage, there are no speakers for that week. Accordingly, if I hear no views to the contrary, I propose that the conference hold only one plenary meeting next week, as usual, on Thursday.

I hear no views to the contrary.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of China, Colombia and Belgium. The first speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Hu.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, please allow me on behalf of the Chinese delegation to express appreciation for your efforts towards relaunching the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament and our gratitude for the valuable work conducted by your predecessors, Ambassador Markku Riemaa and Ambassador de La Fortelle. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Moray, Deputy Secretary-General, and the secretariat for the enormous assistance they have rendered to the work of the Conference.

Since the end of the cold war, the international security situation has moved in the direction of detente. The relations among major Powers have improved and a series of positive developments have been registered on the arms control and disarmament front. At the same time, the international community is also confronted with such challenges as the burgeoning of increasingly diversified and non-traditional threats to its security. These threats dramatically erupted with the events of 11 September, which severely rocked the overall international security situation and have profoundly affected the security concepts of every country. The question of how to achieve and maintain security in the new century is one which deeply preoccupies us all.

At the present time, with our deeply rooted aspirations towards multilateralism and the democratization of international relations and the growing interdependence of the security of all countries, it is essential that we all adopt a new security concept centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination. This will require building mutual trust through dialogue, settling disputes through negotiation and seeking security for mutually beneficial cooperation. Only by so doing can each country achieve its own security based on the safeguarding of common security for all and only by so doing can we create a peaceful and stable international security environment for the sustainable progress of arms control and disarmament. Such bodies as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia have accumulated invaluable experience in this regard.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Since the demise of the ABM Treaty, which has constituted a cornerstone of international strategic balance and stability for the last 30 years, the global strategic framework has undergone a complex and radical evolution. An urgent question that must be addressed by all countries is the kind of new global strategic framework that should now be built, to safeguard effectively world peace and stability in the twenty-first century.

We believe, first and foremost, that the paramount objective of any new global strategic framework should be the common security of all countries. Second, this new global strategic framework should be based on the safeguarding of and respect for the norms of international law. Third, the most effective way of building a stable global strategic framework would be through strengthened international cooperation. In this regard we believe that the following elements are indispensable: continued and intensified efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and diminish the role of nuclear weapons; prevention of the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space; non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and ensuring that missile defence systems do not disrupt the global strategic balance and stability or lead to the proliferation of missiles and related technologies.

Progress in nuclear disarmament hinges both on the global strategic balance and stability and on undiminished security for all. Countries with the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenals share a special and principal responsibility for nuclear disarmament. China welcomes the signing of the Moscow Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, on strategic offensive reductions. It is our hope that, in implementing their treaty obligations, the two sides will strictly apply the principles of irreversibility and verifiability, so as to achieve the genuine reduction and destruction of their nuclear warheads and means of delivery.

As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never dodged its nuclear disarmament-related responsibilities and obligations. From the very first day that it came to possess nuclear weapons, China solemnly declared that at no time and under no circumstances would it be the first to use nuclear weapons. It also gave an unconditional undertaking not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China has always kept its nuclear weapon forces at the minimum level necessary for self-defence.

We reiterate our appeal that all five of the nuclear-weapon States give a mutual undertaking never, under any circumstances, to be the first to use nuclear weapons and commit themselves unconditionally and in a legally binding manner never to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State.

We continue to set store by the CTBT, for it serves to check the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. All countries should therefore campaign for the entry into force of the CTBT and for the early completion of the preparatory work on such issues as establishing an appropriate verification regime. Equally important, an FMCT should be negotiated and concluded, to halt the quantitative accumulation of nuclear fissile materials for weapons. We support efforts by the Conference on Disarmament to achieve a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, so as to launch FMCT negotiations at an early date.

(Mr. Hu, China)

The achievement of a CTBT and an FMCT, accompanied by the conclusion of a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances and the withdrawal of the nuclear weapons stationed on the territory of other countries, will be conducive to further advancing the nuclear disarmament process towards the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. The maintenance of global strategic stability and preservation of undiminished security for all are of fundamental importance to this process. In this connection, the comprehensive rather than selective implementation of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference is not merely desirable: it is essential. We call upon all the States that have not yet done so to join the NPT, so as to ensure that the treaty achieves universal adherence at the earliest possible date.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones represents a significant step towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. To this end, China has always respected and supported efforts by non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones in line with the situation in their respective regions and on the basis of agreements reached through consultations. We also maintain that nuclear-weapon States should respect the status of nuclear-weapon-free zones and fulfil the relevant obligations. Thus, China has signed and ratified protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba. Proceeding from this position, China supports the efforts of Central Asian States to establish a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. We respect the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia and appreciate the efforts by Belarus to set in place a nuclear-weapon-free space in central Eastern Europe. We also support the position of the Middle Eastern countries with regard to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in their region.

In 2001, Premier Zhu Rongji of China declared China's continued support for the efforts by ASEAN to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone and its readiness to sign the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone at the earliest possible date. China hopes that ASEAN and the four other nuclear-weapon States will soon resolve the still outstanding issues so that the protocol will be open for signature at an early date. China is also of the view that, in their consultations, the relevant parties should fully take into consideration the agreement of principle reached between ASEAN and China in 1999 and ensure that the text of the protocol conforms to the purpose and principles of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes is the common aspiration and demand of all humankind. With the continuing development of space technology, outer space is playing an ever more important role in peoples' economic, social and scientific life and the space assets of all countries are constantly increasing. At the same time, however, the development of military technologies and outer-space-related weaponry, coupled with a succession of new outer-space warfare theories and concepts, have brought the danger of weaponization and an arms race in outer space. Such a prospect will disrupt and even derail the process of the peaceful use of outer space and further damage the global strategic balance and stability, which will be in no country's interests. Action to prevent such a dangerous eventuality must be high on the agenda of the international community.

(Mr. Hu, China)

On 29 June 2002 China, together with the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Belarus, Zimbabwe and the Syrian Arab Republic, tabled at this Conference a working paper, contained in document CD/1679, entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space". Our objective in this paper is to use the multilateral framework of the Conference on Disarmament and the binding force of the law to close the loophole in the existing outer space control and disarmament legal regime and to put an effective stop to the weaponization of outer space, so as to maintain the peace and tranquillity of outer space. We should point out that this joint working paper only outlines our preliminary views on a new outer space treaty. Our minds remain open and we welcome any views and suggestions on ways of improving this document.

It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to hold formal or informal meetings to work in a substantive fashion on this working paper, so as to lay the foundations for future negotiations.

The events of 11 September have once again highlighted the urgency and importance of measures to ensure the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Non-proliferation is the shared responsibility of the international community and it is also the policy consistently pursued by the Chinese Government. We have been taking measures to strengthen and improve our export control systems. At the end of March 2002, China notified IAEA that it had completed the required legal procedures for the protocol additional to the safeguards agreement and for the entry into force of the protocol for China. We hope that other countries will take positive steps in this regard.

The international community is obliged to take concerted action in adopting cooperational rather than confrontational approaches and in applying uniform rather than double or even multiple standards with a view to establishing and perfecting a reasonable, equitable and universal non-proliferation system and to concluding relevant international legal instruments which it must observe and constantly endeavour to improve. Only by so doing can it hope to attain the goal of non-proliferation.

For any country at the drop of a hat to impose unjustifiable sanctions on others in the name of non-proliferation or on the grounds of its domestic legislation or national policy conflicts with the relevant rights and obligations established by international law and is therefore unacceptable.

Where the issue of missiles is concerned, an effective approach would be to pursue the establishment of a comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral mechanism. China supports the idea of the United Nations playing a fundamental and leading role in this field. China also supports and actively participates in the work of the United Nations panel of governmental experts on missiles.

We have taken part in some of the discussion on the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. As an initial observation, we note that the draft code has not taken full account of the views of developing countries, thus falling short of their

(Mr. Hu, China)

expectations. We hope that the drafters of this document will be able to make themselves receptive to a diversity of views so that the text can be further improved and endorsed by more countries.

We deeply regret that the BWC Fifth Review Conference, held in 2001, failed to reach consensus. The success of the resumed review conference, to be held in November 2002, is therefore of special importance to the process of preserving and strengthening the BWC. Undoubtedly, the outcome of the conference will depend on the good faith of all parties and the commitments that they make. Every effort must be made to address the reasonable political and security concerns of each State party and to avoid confrontation.

China still maintains that the continued negotiation of a balanced and effective protocol represents the most realistic way forward to the comprehensive strengthening of the BWC. At the same time, China remains open to any proposal aimed at strengthening the BWC process in the multilateral framework. In principle, we are not against the organization of follow-up measures to the Fifth Review Conference, such as annual meetings of States parties, etc. We believe, however, that the mandate, content and status of such meetings should be clearly stipulated.

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. We have fulfilled our obligations under the Convention meticulously and in good faith. We have constantly strengthened and improved our legislative controls on the export and import of the chemicals concerned, as well as on their production technologies and facilities. As a victim of the use of chemical weapons, the Chinese Government requests the country concerned, in accordance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, to embark, at the earliest possible date, on a substantive process of destruction and to ensure the complete and thorough elimination of all the chemical weapons which it abandoned on the territory of China as soon as possible in a timeframe set down by the Convention. We congratulate Mr. Rogelio Pfirter on his appointment to the post of Director-General of OPCW. We hope that all State parties will remain committed to strengthening the effectiveness and universality of the Convention and work together in pursuit of this goal.

At the second session of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts, which concluded a short while ago, all sides held far-reaching and useful discussions. On the issue of explosive remnants of war, much common ground has been identified while some differences still remain and these merit further study and consideration. We hope that the State parties to CCW will agree on ways and means of resolving the issue of explosive remnants of war. On the issue of anti-vehicle landmines, there are still fundamental differences between the States parties. It is our belief that the issue of anti-vehicle landmines has been adequately resolved by the Amended Landmines Protocol and we do not perceive any need to conclude another protocol in this area.

In 2001, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects approved its programme of work and the United Nations adopted the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes.

(Mr. Hu, China)

These represent important steps by the international community towards resolving the issue of small arms. As mandated by the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to this effect, governmental experts, including one from China, are currently studying the issue of the identification and tracing of small arms. We wish them success in their work. I would like to reiterate that China supports efforts to strengthen controls over the production of and trade in small arms. It is currently carrying out the programme of work in good faith and giving positive consideration to signing the firearms protocol. At the same time, it is our view that the measures in question should not in any way compromise the security of any country. They should be both realistic and effective. These identification measures should be sufficient merely to identify the manufacturing country and meet the needs of other Governments for tracing purposes. There is no need to set up a uniform global system of identification, or to publicize identification information.

As for its role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament acts as a barometer of the international political and security situation. Revitalization of the Conference hinges directly on the international security environment.

Views undoubtedly differ today on such fundamental issues as unilateralism versus multilateralism, absolute security for one country versus common security for all, and whether it is necessary to negotiate and conclude universal arms control and disarmament legal instruments. All these divergent views have acted as a severe brake on arms control and disarmament efforts, which now find themselves at a crossroads without any clear direction as to how to proceed. In these circumstances, it is vital that the Conference on Disarmament take stock and give careful consideration to such questions as the status of the existing international legal system for arms control and disarmaments; the future of multilateral arms control and disarmament; and the preservation of global strategic stability.

The Chinese delegation has noted that the parties concerned have put forward a number of new proposals on the work programme of the Conference on Disarmament, in a bid to break the current deadlock. We appreciate those efforts and stand ready to work together with all parties, on a comprehensive and balanced basis, in our endeavours to achieve a programme of work. As far as the working arrangements for PAROS are concerned, the Chinese delegation submitted a positive and constructive compromise proposal in June 2002, to the effect that the work of the ad hoc committee on PAROS be geared towards negotiating relevant international legal instruments rather than insisting on a negotiation mandate. We hope that all sides will take full consideration of the Chinese position and respond favourably to this constructive approach.

With regard to the question of how the Conference on Disarmament should deal with the issue of radiological weapons, our minds remain open and we will be happy to listen to and consider views from all sides. We support the continuation of the work of three special coordinators on organizational and procedural issues.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Mr. Jiang Zeming, the President of China, has reaffirmed that the goal of China's foreign policy is the maintenance of world peace and the promotion of common development. Let us join hands in an endeavour to overcome difficulties and to help revitalize the arms control and disarmament process, with a view to creating a peaceful and stable international security environment.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Colombia, Ambassador Reyes.

Mr. REYES RODRÍGUES (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, on behalf of the ambassadors of Algeria, Belgium, Chile and Sweden, and on my own behalf, and bearing in mind that we have come to the end, today, of the 10-day period originally mentioned by Ambassador Dembri in connection with the draft proposal on a programme of work, which we submitted for consideration by the Conference, I would like to inform you that our consultations have continued and it remains our intention to exercise the right accorded to each and everyone of the countries represented in the Conference to analyse, propose and promote ideas in the search for a solution to the state of paralysis afflicting the Conference on Disarmament

Let me also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to you for the energetic, objective and impartial manner in which you have guided our work.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Colombia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Belgium, Ambassador Lint.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on the active and committed manner in which you have discharged your duties as President of the Conference on Disarmament. You may rest assured that you can count on the full cooperation of Belgium in your efforts to bring the Conference out of the impasse in which it finds itself. I would also like to thank you for your hard work and your untiring commitment to the Conference, as well as for the willingness to listen and the openness which you have shown for the initiative of the five ambassadors.

On 24 August we will celebrate, so to speak, the second anniversary of the submission of document CD/1624, known as the proposal of my friend, Ambassador Amorim. For two years, this proposal has been considered by some as a basis for future consultations. For others, including the five ambassadors, who have said so publicly, this proposal could be accepted and implemented immediately. Over the last four years no proposal for a programme of work has received unanimous support in this assembly.

For that reason, a group of ambassadors recently having served as president have been looking closely at the points of disagreement relating to the Amorim proposal and have tried to formulate elements of a text which would enable the Conference to do its job.

(Mr. Lint, Belgium)

My colleague and friend Ambassador Reyes of Colombia has given you some pointers regarding the future of our initiative. I would like to state that we are still seeking areas of convergence, in particular with regard to the mandate for PAROS.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the many colleagues who have given us their support by offering advice, in respect of both the substance and the form. We can assure you that we will spare no effort in our endeavours to come up with a proposed programme of work acceptable to all.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

This concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If this is not the case, I would like to make some concluding remarks as the German presidency comes to an end.

In my opening statement on 27 June, I suggested that we deal with the following items during the German presidency: first, to continue our efforts to adopt a programme of work on the basis of our agreed agenda for the 2002 session, as contained in document CD/1662, in particular with regard to the so-called “four issues” - negative security assurances, nuclear disarmament, FMCT and PAROS; and, second, to revisit item 5 of our agenda which is called “New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons; radiological weapons”, with a view to reconsidering the issue of radiological weapons in the light of the new threats of terrorism.

The issue of radiological weapons has been the subject of intensive discussions, both at a bilateral level and in the groups. At the open-ended informal consultations on that issue held after our plenary meeting on 8 August, an impressive number of delegations expressed their views and positions, many of them of a preliminary nature. I will request the secretariat to introduce my discussion paper as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament. The substantive and far-reaching exchange of views has shown the importance that we all attach to the issue. Accordingly, in my opinion, the Conference on Disarmament should continue its considerations and common reflections on the issue of radiological weapons, in order to come to common conclusions. In this regard, an appropriate way forward could be to establish a special coordinator. As the appointment of a special coordinator on, among other issues, radiological weapons, has thus far been included in the initiative of the five former presidents, I have refrained from formally introducing this proposal now in order not to complicate procedures.

It would also be useful to take up proposals which were made in our informal meeting on 8 August, such as inviting a representative of IAEA to give an overview of the Agency's activities on radiological weapons and the preparation of a compilation of the documents which exist thus far on that issue within the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to re-emphasize that the broad participation in the discussion on this issue has demonstrated that it deserves to be

(The President)

pursued independently from the question of whether we reach agreement on a programme of work. Already at present it can be stated that the lively debate was an example of what the Conference on Disarmament could be when we come back to substantive discussions.

This brings me to the central goal of this presidency: reaching agreement on a programme of work. The German presidency held various consultations with the aim of bringing us nearer to common ground on the so-called "four issues". I must emphasize again that we need more movement in positions if there really is a wish to reach common ground. Germany will - also beyond the term of its presidency - continue to do everything within its capacity - both here in Geneva and in bilateral contacts at the level of capitals - to contribute to overcoming the present impasse in the Conference.

I have had the privilege of staying in close contact with our distinguished colleagues who put forward the initiative of the five former presidents. I very much welcome the lively and substantive discussions following the introduction of the initiative, made by Ambassador Dembri, as *primus inter pares*, in the plenary on 31 July, both among delegations and in the groups. I find it particularly encouraging that reactions have also been brought forward in plenary meetings, thereby giving an example of making better use of our plenary meetings.

I express my respects to Ambassador Dembri, Ambassador Lint, Ambassador Reyes Rodríguez, Ambassador Salander and Ambassador Vega for their sincere efforts to bring our Conference back to substantial work. I appeal to all delegations to respond to that effort in that same spirit and I very much hope that, with this initiative, we will break the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to thank the members of our secretariat and our interpreters for their excellent work. My best wishes go to my successor, Ambassador Szabó. And I thank you all for your cooperation.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor? That is not the case. This therefore concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 22 August, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.