

**COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT**

CD/PV.209.  
5 April 1983  
ENGLISH

---

FINAL RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND NINTH PLENARY MEETING  
held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Tuesday, 5 April 1983, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. F. van Dongen

(Netherlands)

## PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria: Mr. A. TAFFAR

Argentina: Mr. J.C. CARSALES  
Mr. R. VILLAMBROSA

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

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

Brazil: Mr. C.A. DE SOUZA E SILVA  
Mr. S. QUEIROZ DUARTE

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

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

Canada: Mr. D.S. McPHAIL  
Mr. G.R. SKINNER  
Mr. M.C. HAMBLIN  
Miss C. de VARENNES

China: Mr. LI LUYE  
Mr. TIAN JIN  
Mrs. GE YUYUN

Cuba: Mr. P. NUNEZ MOSQUERA

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

Egypt: Mr. I.A. HASSAN  
Miss W. BASSIM  
Mr. A.M. ABBAS

Ethiopia: Miss K. SINEGIORGIS  
Mr. F. YOHANNES

France: Mr. F. DE LA GORCE  
Mr. J. DE BEAUSSE  
Mr. B. D'ABOVILLE

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

Germany, Federal Republic of: Mr. H. WEGENER  
Mr. F. ELBE  
Mr. W. ROHR

Hungary: Mr. I. KOMIVES  
Mr. T. TOTH

India: Mr. S. SARAN

Indonesia: Mr. N. WISNOEMOERTI  
Mrs. P. RAMADHAN  
Mr. B. DARMOSUTANTO  
Mr. I.H. WIRAATMADJA

Iran: Mr. F. SHAHABI SIRJANI

Italy:

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

Japan:

Mr. R. IMAI  
Mr. M. KONISHI  
Mr. K. TANAKA

Kenya:

Mr. D.C.C. DON NANJIRA

Mexico:

Mrs. Z. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO

Mongolia:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG  
Mr. S.O. BOLD  
Mr. O. CHIMIDREGZEN

Morocco:

Mr. A. SKALLI  
Mr. S.M. RAHHALI  
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands:

Mr. F. VAN DONGEN  
Mr. J. RAMAKER  
Mr. R.J. AKKERMAN

Nigeria:

Mr. A.N.C. NWAZOMUDOH  
Mr. J.O. OBOH  
Mr. L.O. AKINDELE  
Mr. A.A. ADEPOJU  
Miss I.E.C. UKEJE

Pakistan:

Mr. M. AHMAD  
Mr. T. ALTAF

Peru:

Mr. V. ROJAS

Poland:

Mr. J. ZAWALONKA  
Mr. J. CIALOWICZ  
Mr. T. STROJWAS  
Mr. G. CZEMPINSKI

Romania:

Mr. T. MELESCANU  
Mr. L. TOADER

Sri Lanka:

Mr. A.T. JAYAKODDY  
Mr. H.M.G.S. PALIHAKKARA

Sweden:

Mr. C. LIDGARD  
Mr. G. EKHOLM  
Mr. H. BERGLUND  
Mr. J. LUNDIN  
Mrs. G. JONANG

Union of Soviet Socialist  
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELIAN  
Mr. Y.K. NAZAROV  
Mr. M.F. TREPICKHALIN  
Mr. Y.M. MALEV  
Mr. G.V. BERDENNIKOV  
Mr. V.F. PRIAKHIN  
Mr. G.N. VASHADZE

United Kingdom:

Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE  
Mr. L.J. MIDDLETON  
Mr. B.P. NOBLE  
Mrs. J.I. LINK  
Miss J.E.F. WRIGHT

United States of America:

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

Venezuela:

Mr. A. LOPEZ OLIVER  
Mr. T. LABRADOR RUBIO

Yugoslavia:

Mr. K. VIDAS  
Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC

Zaire:

Mrs. ESAKI-EKANGA KABEYA

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

Mr. R. JAIPAL

Deputy Secretary of the  
Committee on Disarmament:

Mr. V. BERASATEGUI

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I declare open the 209th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

The first task of a new Chairman, and undoubtedly the pleasantest, is that of thanking his predecessor. In the present instance there is all the more reason for doing so because His Excellency, Ambassador Ali Skalli, fulfilled his duties as Chairman of the Committee on Disarmament so brilliantly and in the interests, at all times, not only of the Committee but also, and perhaps primarily, of the causes it serves. I think, therefore, that I can speak on behalf of all members of the Committee, to whichever group they belong, in offering Ambassador Ali Skalli the warm and very sincere thanks of the Committee on Disarmament. Ambassador Skalli discharged his tasks with a skill we all recognize, with a mastery of language, the prime instrument of diplomacy which again we all recognize, and with exceptional dedication and energy. I should therefore like to offer Ambassador Skalli once again, on my own behalf and I think on that of all members of the Committee, our most sincere thanks, and as the new Chairman I should like to reaffirm my feelings of admiration and friendship towards him.

In accordance with its Programme of Work, the Committee starts today the consideration of item 3 of its agenda, "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". As usual, members wishing to make statements on any other subject relevant to the work of the Committee may do so, in conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure. You will recall that, at our 207th plenary meeting, my predecessor announced that it had been agreed during informal consultations that the question of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban would also be discussed at our plenary meeting today.

Today's speakers' list is a long one. I have on my list the United States of America, Mongolia, Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Australia, Belgium, Argentina, Algeria, Pakistan, India, Mexico, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Burma, Sweden and Italy.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Mr. Busby.

Mr. BUSBY (United States of America): Mr. Chairman, it is a great honour to be the first speaker to have the opportunity to welcome you to the Chair of our Committee. Personally, and on behalf of the entire United States delegation, let me offer you our complete co-operation and express our pleasure at having the opportunity to continue our work under your experienced and able guidance. Let me also through you, express our admiration and appreciation to Ambassador Skalli for the skilful and imaginative manner in which he discharged his responsibilities as Chairman during a particularly difficult period in the work of our Committee.

My delegation has asked for the floor today to briefly outline our position regarding the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban. In particular, we would like to give our views as to how that Working Group might proceed in order to fulfil the mandate upon which we all agreed last year. I do not intend to make a long rhetorical statement as to the adequacy or sufficiency of the mandate. That question was debated at length last year and it is for each delegation to decide for itself whether it is willing to begin work under the existing mandate.

(Mr. Busby, United States)

Rather, I would like to explain fully the position of my delegation regarding the mandate and what it requires; offer our views as to the relationship of the verification and compliance issues to other aspects of any future treaty banning nuclear explosions; discuss briefly the verification and compliance issues themselves; and finally make some suggestions as to how the Working Group might proceed.

First, let me speak about the mandate. It calls on the Working Group to "discuss and define ... issues relating to verification and compliance". This is clear and unambiguous language. It does not call for the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Rather, it requires the Working Group to bring issues relating to verification and compliance into sharper focus.

What do we mean by "issues relating to verification and compliance"? Last year concerns were expressed by some delegations that our proposal was too restrictive to allow substantive work to be done. But from the outset my delegation has viewed this language rather broadly. Clearly, any information relevant to the verification and compliance problem is within the mandate and is pertinent to our work. Although we would not like to see the Working Group diverted from its main task, in so far as any delegation holds a national position on a particular issue which affects its own view of verification and compliance, then it should bring these views forward and discuss that relationship. We will have no objection. I hope one thing is clear in the minds of all delegations. When the United States proposed last spring a mandate on verification and compliance, it was out of a genuine desire to have the Committee on Disarmament undertake discussions on these issues. And while it is true, as we have often stated, that we are not prepared to negotiate a CTBT now, we did not then, nor do we now, have any ulterior motives of avoiding reference to or discussion of other aspects of a test ban. So in all respects the mandate is broad enough for a full examination of the problem.

Perhaps I could share with you our own view of the relationship of verification and compliance to other aspects of any future treaty. We clearly see a relationship between verification and compliance questions and the scope of, the objectives of and participation in any comprehensive test ban. But does that mean that we must first decide on the scope of a future treaty before we can engage in meaningful work regarding verification and compliance? We do not believe that to be the case. The very term comprehensive test ban is self-defining when considered in a multilateral context. A CTBT is an agreement not to carry out any nuclear explosions, and therefore the problem is to verify the absence of nuclear explosions on a world-wide basis. By taking this broadest possible view of scope, the Working Group can begin discussing the problems surrounding the creation of a verification system in which any and all States parties can participate and in which all States parties will share both benefits and obligations. It has always been a United States objective that any future CTBT should be designed so as to attract universal adherence, and we need a verification and compliance system which will be effective on a world-wide basis.

Viewed in this context, it is clear what direction our discussions in the Working Group should take. The Group should undertake a serious examination of issues relating to the multilateral verification of compliance with a total ban on nuclear explosions on a world-wide basis. We envision a system that all States parties will be able to participate in, both in terms of the right to share in the system as well as the obligation to make it work. By its very nature, such a system will accomplish two purposes: first, it will verify the cessation of testing by all who have tested nuclear explosives, and, secondly, it will verify the absence of commencement of testing by those who have not done so. That is what we have in mind.

(Mr. Busby, United States)

Let me now be a bit more specific as to what the Working Group might do during this session of the Committee on Disarmament. There are two broad categories of issues. First, the degree of verifiability and how it might be raised to a level that each State party might consider to be acceptable; and, secondly, mechanisms for ensuring compliance. In the area of seismic means of verification, we would suggest a focus on four general topics:

International monitoring networks and how to fill gaps in existing systems;

The problem of identifying — as opposed to detecting — the origin of seismic signals;

Further needs regarding the detection of nuclear explosive signals in areas of high seismic activity; and,

Seismic data exchange and analysis mechanisms.

In the second category of issues, compliance, the purpose of any compliance mechanism is to ensure confidence in a legal regime by establishing a workable means to resolve disputes and eliminate misunderstandings.

Some elements of compliance which we believe should be examined are:

Obligations to ensure compliance with data-exchange provisions;

The role of fact-finding bodies or commissions;

The handling of allegations of violations; and,

The possible role of experts groups as advisers.

An additional issue which the Committee should address relates to the role of on-site inspection. This is an issue which cuts across both verification and compliance. Obviously, particular attention will have to be paid to the role of on-site inspection in any future CTBT.

My delegation has never argued that the mandate, to which we all agreed last spring, was sufficient to allow negotiation of a CTBT. In fact, we have repeatedly stated that this was not our purpose in proposing the creation of this Working Group. We have even gone further and stated that any future decision of the United States Government to negotiate a CTBT would have to take account of a broad range of factors relating to our national security and that no delegation should consider our willingness to participate in a Working Group here as indicating an intent to begin immediately the negotiation of a CTBT. It remains a long-term goal.

Given the nature of our debates last spring and the negotiations which led to the creation, by consensus, of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test-Ban, surely no one is under any illusion regarding our position. For this reason, we find the position of some delegations which argue that the mandate has been fulfilled as simply a politically expedient way of attempting to return this Committee to the stalemated situation of 1981 and 1982. This may suit their political purposes. But, if those delegations did not intend to do serious work under the mandate, why did they agree to it? We urge those delegations to sit down with us and begin what my delegation believes will be useful, productive work.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his contribution, for his kind words addressed to the Chairman, and even more for the kind words addressed to the outgoing Chairman. I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Erdembileg.

Mr. ERDEMBILEG (Mongolia) (translated from Russian): Mr. Chairman, allow me to congratulate you on your accession to the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of April.

I should like to express our sincere gratitude to Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, the Chairman for the month of March. During the period of his chairmanship the Committee succeeded in resolving a number of organizational problems. I should like to say in this connection that a timely decision on these questions in the Committee was prevented by the opposition of the group of Western countries. It should be said frankly that it was the constructive efforts and flexible approach of the group of socialist States and the Group of 21 countries which enabled the Committee on Disarmament, in the last days of March, under the guidance of Ambassador Skalli, to adopt its agenda and programme of work, to re-establish the ad hoc working groups and to settle certain other organizational matters. However, a number of other important issues, the solution of which would help to increase the Committee's effectiveness, remain unresolved.

Today's plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament is to be devoted to a discussion of a very important subject relating to one of the key issues on the agenda, the question of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, namely, what mandate should be given to the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban so that headway can be made in this matter.

The problem of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests has been under discussion in the Committee on Disarmament for some two and a half decades now. But real results have yet to be achieved, in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of States are in favour of the speediest possible solution of this vital problem.

In present conditions of the exacerbation of the international situation, there is an ever greater need for the achievement of an international agreement which would effectively halt the further improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of new types and systems of such weapons. Such a measure would contribute to the limitation of the arms race and the reduction of the threat of the outbreak of nuclear war.

But the efforts of peace-loving States are frustrated by the dangerous activities of the States opposed to the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, which are making vast military preparations and carrying out military programmes for the modernization of nuclear armaments and the development of new types of nuclear weapons. The United States administration is now allocating trillions of dollars for the purpose of achieving military superiority and in order to have even more weapons on land, at sea, in the air and in outer space. The President of the United States recently announced plans for a sharp build-up of all types of nuclear weapons, the development of a large-scale and effective anti-missile defence, the adoption of measures for the deployment of medium-range missiles in western Europe and the creation of qualitatively new systems of conventional weapons. The United States is using its so-called defensive concept as an excuse for the relentless continuation of the development and improvement of its offensive strategic forces in order to acquire a nuclear first-strike potential. These pretensions have provoked violent indignation and a widespread wave of protest on the part of the world community, including the peoples of west European countries whom the United States is trying to use as its nuclear hostages.

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

The persistent demands of the overwhelming majority of the members of the Committee on Disarmament finally led, last year, to the setting up of an ad hoc working group on a nuclear test ban. However, for reasons you all know, it was given a limited mandate which did not refer clearly and precisely to the need to conduct negotiations with a view to the drafting of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

The work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban confirmed the fears expressed by my delegation and many other delegations in connection with its limited mandate which was unjustifiably confined to questions relating to "verification and compliance".

The history of the negotiations on this question is replete with examples of the use of this matter of verification in order to delay the attainment of agreement or to avoid settling the issue altogether. This was clearly evident in the attitude of the United States with respect to the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban. In this connection the United States resorted to the typical device, which we have seen before, of trying to give the discussions in the Group a purely "technical" character. At the same time it was argued that progress towards a solution of the problem of nuclear-weapon tests could be achieved only if there were preliminary consideration of and agreement on the "technical" aspects of verification. This was affirmed even by the Vice-President of the United States, Mr. Bush, when he spoke to our Committee and called the process of drafting treaty texts a "fruitless exercise" if verification questions were not settled first. While trying to show that the United States is approaching the negotiations in a business-like manner and proposing that agreement should be reached on various "technical" aspects of verification solely as a basis for an agreement on the substance of the issue, the United States is in fact preventing the attainment of agreement. What happened in the Ad Hoc Working Group during the last session is clear evidence of what I have said.

Furthermore, after agreeing to the establishment of an ad hoc working group on a nuclear test ban, the United States declared that it considered the drafting of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests not as an urgent matter but rather as a "long-term goal". We have just heard the statement of the distinguished representative of the United States of America, in which he made various observations with respect to questions of verification. We shall study his remarks carefully and give our views on them in due course.

The complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests is one of the most important problems in the broad complex of measures needed to avert the nuclear threat. The United Nations General Assembly has made this clear in innumerable recommendations.

With a view to the creation of more favourable conditions for the drafting of a treaty, the United Nations General Assembly also appealed to all nuclear-weapon States, as a demonstration of goodwill, to refrain from carrying out nuclear explosions of any kind from a date to be agreed on between them until the conclusion of the treaty.

The General Assembly has repeatedly called upon the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, which ought now to be concentrating particular attention on the drafting

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests, urgently to start practical negotiations on the elaboration of such a treaty. In resolution 37/72, for example, the General Assembly urged all States members of the Committee on Disarmament

"To assign to the Ad Hoc Working Group on item 1 of the Committee's agenda (nuclear test ban) a mandate which should provide for the multilateral negotiation of a treaty for the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests, to be initiated immediately after the beginning of the session of the Committee to be held in 1983".

Clearly, it will only be possible to implement this decision of the General Assembly if the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group is broadened and the Group is able to proceed to practical negotiations on this question.

We therefore consider that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group should be revised so as to permit the discussion in substance of the problem as a whole for the purpose of drafting the text of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Only a broad and clear mandate will enable the Committee to fulfil the relevant recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly.

The solution of this problem will be greatly helped by the document submitted to the Committee on Disarmament by the Soviet Union containing the "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests". This document takes into account everything positive that has been achieved during the many years of discussion of the question of a nuclear test ban in various forums and also reflects the further views of many States, in particular on questions relating to the verification of compliance with the future treaty.

Today's discussion in the Committee on the question of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group has convinced us that it is time at last to pass from words to actions and embark urgently on negotiations on the drafting of the text of the future treaty under a broadened mandate.

We should like once more to emphasize that the extreme importance and urgency of this question necessitates the participation in the negotiations of all nuclear-weapon States without exception.

The Mongolian delegation considers that questions relating to the verification of compliance with the future treaty should be considered in close connection with the treaty itself, which should prohibit all nuclear-weapon test explosions in all environments, be of unlimited duration, provide for a generally acceptable solution to the problem of underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and include among its parties all nuclear-weapon States.

We feel compelled to point out that the draft of a very appropriate mandate was proposed by the socialist countries and is contained in document CD/259. And as we observed earlier, the wording for a mandate put forward by the Group of 21 in document CD/181 also merits attention.

(Mr. Erdembileg, Mongolia)

Lastly, the Mongolian delegation wishes, on behalf of the group of socialist countries, to put forward the following new draft text of a mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, which is fully in accordance with the recommendations made by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session. The text is as follows:

"The Committee on Disarmament decides to assign to the Ad Hoc Working Group on item 1 of its agenda, 'Nuclear test ban', a mandate providing for negotiations on a treaty for the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests.

"The Ad Hoc Working Group will take into account in its work all existing proposals and future initiatives on this matter and will report to the Committee on Disarmament on the progress of its work before the end of the 1983 session".

In accordance with the decision adopted by the Committee at its 207th plenary meeting on 29 March 1983, which states, inter alia, that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban for 1983 will be agreed upon not later than by 7 April 1983, I should like to ask you, on behalf of the socialist countries, immediately to conduct the necessary consultations in the Committee on the draft mandate so that the Committee can take a decision on it as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the representative of Mongolia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming chairmen. I now give the floor to the representative of Poland, Mr. Zawalonka.

Mr. ZAWALONKA (Poland): Mr. Chairman, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you on behalf of the Polish delegation in the Chair of the Committee on Disarmament. I am convinced that under your able and skilful guidance this Committee will use all the opportunities in the fulfilment of its responsible tasks which the whole international community is closely following.

I sincerely thank your predecessor, Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, for his valuable contribution to the work done by the Committee under his chairmanship in the month of March.

Taking the floor today, I would like to express my delegation's views on one of the most urgent questions at the present stage of the Committee's discussion on a nuclear test ban: the mandate of the relevant Ad Hoc Working Group. In accordance with the decision taken on 29 March last, the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban has been re-established on the assumption that its mandate "... may thereafter be revised, as decided by the Committee...". I quote from the decision contained in Working Paper No. 81/Rev.1 dated 29 March 1983. I understand that it is with this in mind that today's plenary meeting is being largely devoted to a debate on a possible revision of the mandate of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban.

(Mr. Zawalonka, Poland)

Last year's discussions, both in the framework of the said Working Group, during the informal consultations and in the statements in plenary, clearly revealed the limited character of this Group's present mandate. The subject of a nuclear test ban or a comprehensive nuclear test ban, which has been actively discussed for more than 20 years in many diplomatic forums, is today one of the subjects most ripe, politically and technically, for finalization -- for negotiation and the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Many speakers, during this present session of the Committee on Disarmament alone, have stated that time and conditions are propitious and all premises exist for such negotiations now. However, the mandate adopted last year, as is well known, does not permit the conduct of full-scale negotiations. In other words, the Working Group had to limit its discussions to the issues relating to the verification and compliance. The delegations of socialist countries agreed to last year's mandate in order not to delay the establishment of the Working Group any longer and to facilitate its taking off after years of intensive efforts in this Committee and its predecessors. At the end of the 1982 session, however, they stated clearly that the Working Group had completed its examination of issues related to verification and compliance, as envisaged in its mandate. They furthermore expressed their view that the Committee should revise the mandate of the Working Group without delay so as to enable it "to negotiate on a treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapon tests, having in mind that this is a question of the highest priority...", as was stated in the report of the NTB Working Group to the Committee (document CD/332).

One of the most complex and controversial problems which impedes disarmament negotiations, and not only in the field of a nuclear test ban, is that of an adequate verification system. The delegations of socialist States have never underestimated the role of verification. Like all the members of this Committee, my delegation, too, is for negotiating -- for elaborating in the process of negotiations -- an adequate verification system for the nuclear test-ban treaty. But I would like to reiterate that the negotiation of any verification procedures should not and cannot be an end in itself. In other words, entering into negotiations on the assumption that they must be concentrated on verification procedures because they are the most important part of any disarmament treaty may well mean deliberately blocking the possibility of making any real progress in negotiations. It is only legitimate to question the intentions expressed in such an attitude towards the negotiations of a nuclear test ban. Let me state in this connection that my delegation would like to see the NTB Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban take up as soon as possible its negotiating task, i.e. negotiate on a treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapon tests, having a sound and balanced verification system, for which all the necessary technical prerequisites exist. Due account should be taken of all existing proposals and future initiatives in this connection.

We are realistic; we do not think that such a treaty will be ready overnight. But what we want and what we appeal for is to start the process now -- the process of time-consuming but painstaking negotiations. It is indeed high time for that.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the representative of Poland, Mr. Zawalonka, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming chairmen. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Issraelyan.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian):  
Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to express our profound gratitude to the Ambassador of Morocco, our friend Mr. Ali Skalli, for his successful conduct of the meetings of the Committee on Disarmament during the month of March, and for the fact that under his guidance the Committee was able to take decisions on certain important organizational matters, first and foremost the adoption of its agenda, with the inclusion in it of the extremely important question of the prevention of nuclear war, and also the re-establishment of the working groups, which will, we hope, undertake very active work during the month of April. I should like to wish you, Mr. Chairman, the representative of the Netherlands, all success in your work during April, in the hope that this month will prove no less satisfactory than the month of March which has just ended.

In view of the Committee's decision on 29 March that we should, at this meeting, consider the question of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, I should like today to express the views of the Soviet delegation on this matter.

The question of a nuclear test ban has the highest priority among all the items on the Committee's agenda. This question has been under discussion for nearly 30 years in various international forums — in the United Nations, at the tripartite negotiations, at meetings of experts and in the Committee on Disarmament. Consequently, all aspects of it have been very carefully studied. Furthermore, they have been studied, not academically but in a strictly practical manner, with a view to dealing with them within the framework of an appropriate treaty. The tripartite negotiations between the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom came very close to the completion of work on such a treaty; however, as you know, these negotiations were broken off in 1980 by the United States, which has refused to resume them. The prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests would be a practical measure towards the limitation of the nuclear arms race, which has assumed unprecedented proportions at the present time and brought the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. This is why the Soviet Union, like the overwhelming majority of the other members of the Committee on Disarmament, attaches particular importance to the speediest possible conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. The Soviet Union has always advocated and continues to advocate the fullest possible use of the opportunities offered by the Committee on Disarmament for the successful conduct of multilateral negotiations with a view to the halting of nuclear tests in all environments and by all those who are carrying them out. It was for this reason that the delegation of the Soviet Union last year supported the proposal for the establishment in the Committee of an ad hoc working group on this matter, and gave its agreement to a compromise formula for the mandate of such a group. In so agreeing, we acted on the belief that the discussion of questions of verification ought not to be used in order to put off the elaboration of an agreement as a whole, as has unfortunately happened in the past, and that such discussion can be useful only if it is not artificially isolated from the specific content of the arms limitation measure in question but is considered in very close connection with that measure.

Last year, the Ad Hoc Working Group held an exchange of views on basic aspects of verification. The delegations of many States interested in the speediest possible conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests made a useful contribution to the Group's work. At the same time,

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

it has regrettably to be said that the United States delegation and the delegations of some of its close allies tried to drag the Working Group into organizational and procedural debates, and to drown the solution of the question of verification in a sea of abstract arguments about the importance of the technical aspects of control. Last year, when we agreed to the compromise formula for the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, it was on the understanding that that mandate was of a provisional character and would be revised the following year. This understanding was shared by many other delegations, as is clear from the fact that the following provision was specifically included in the relevant decision of the Committee:

"The ad hoc working group ... will report to the Committee on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1982 session. The Committee will thereafter take a decision on subsequent courses of action with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard."

On the basis of this provision, efforts have been made in the Committee from the very beginning of this session to work out a new mandate. However, they have been blocked, primarily by the United States delegation. In order not to hold up the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, we agreed that the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban should resume its work on the basis of the old mandate. At the same time, in the decision it adopted on 29 March, the Committee particularly emphasized that the mandate of that Group might thereafter be revised,

We believe that this should be done immediately, as a matter of urgency, as indeed is stated in the decision of the Committee to which I have referred. We consider that the wording for the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban which was put forward today on behalf of the delegations of the socialist countries, including that of the Soviet Union, by Ambassador Erdembileg of Mongolia, conforms most closely to the recommendation of the General Assembly. We appeal to other delegations to support that proposal.

The Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban should begin its work in the next few days. It is the Soviet delegation's intention to take an active part in that work, with the aim of the speediest possible drafting, and I repeat, drafting, of an appropriate treaty, including, of course, provisions on verification. All the necessary prerequisites exist for the Working Group to proceed to practical negotiations on a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

We put before the Committee for its consideration not long ago a document containing the "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests" which in our view offers a practical basis for multilateral negotiations on this matter, a basis, moreover, which takes into account the views of a large number of States and the elements agreed on in the course of the tripartite negotiations. Many delegations have already, at the present session, spoken in favour of practical negotiations on the question of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the broadening of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We note with satisfaction that delegations interested in the speedy conclusion of a test-ban treaty have made and will evidently continue to make constructive proposals in this connection.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

We have also taken note of the statement by the Swedish delegation of its intention to submit the text of a draft treaty on this question in the near future and we shall await this document with interest.

Thus, there are more than enough concrete proposals in the Committee, both of a general and of a specific character, for the conduct of business-like negotiations with a view to the speedy completion of the drafting of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests and the submission of the draft text of such a treaty to the United Nations General Assembly at its next session, as indeed is called for by General Assembly resolution 37/72. We are eagerly awaiting the start of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group under the experienced guidance of Ambassador Herder, the representative of the German Democratic Republic, so that all questions connected with the drafting of the treaty, including, of course, questions of verification, can be considered in their entirety in the Working Group.

Before I conclude my statement, I should like to make one or two comments on the remarks of the United States delegation. We shall, of course, have an opportunity to give our views in substance on the topics he proposed for consideration by the Working Group. For the moment I should like to pick out two thoughts, two themes from the United States statement. The first concerns the nature of the activity of the Committee and its working groups.

The United States representative in his admittedly short statement nevertheless frequently stressed the word "discussions". The holding of discussions in the Committee can indeed sometimes be useful, but as we have had occasion to point out once again only recently at a plenary meeting, this international body has a specific characteristic distinguishing it from all other international bodies in which discussions are held. This Committee is not a debating club. It is a negotiating body. This applies particularly to the working groups, which were set up not merely to conduct negotiations but to conduct negotiations leading to the drafting and conclusion of appropriate international agreements. Does this mean that we are opposed to discussions? No, of course not. Sometimes, I repeat, discussions are necessary. This applies to problems that have not been discussed before, to problems that are new and that have not been studied. But what is there to discuss, gentlemen, on the subject of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests? For 30 years various bodies, consisting of 157 States, of three States and even of two States, have discussed and studied the matter and, more than that, have even put on paper the greater part of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. And the United States delegation itself, at the tripartite negotiations, had a hand in this formulation of a treaty. But suddenly we are told that all this must be scrapped — none of it happened — forget about it, gentlemen, this problem has appeared only today and it is a long-term one. We could discuss it for another 30 years or even another 300 years. This is why we believe that the substance of our differences lies precisely in this word. Although we are not opposed to discussions in general, we object to discussions on this issue. There have been enough of them; it is now time to go on to the formulation, the drafting of a text.

My second comment concerns the very broad and important problem of the national interests of States. The distinguished representative of the United States referred repeatedly to the national interests of his country. He said, for example, the following:

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

"We have even gone further and stated that any future decision of the United States Government to negotiate a CTBT would have to take account of a broad range of factors related to our national security and that no delegation should consider our willingness to participate in a Working Group as indicating an intent to begin immediately the negotiation of a CTBT."

Of course, every State has its national interests, and naturally, every delegation representing its State takes great care to safeguard the national security interests of that country. But surely the whole question, distinguished representative of the United States, resides in the fact that the national security interests of the United States in this matter are at variance with the interests of all other States. That is the problem. No one can tell the United States delegation, or any other delegation, how to protect the national security interests of its country. That is a matter of the sovereign right of each State and the duty of each delegation. But the problem arises that there is a divergence between the interests of the United States and the interests, I can say without any risk, of all other members of the international community. To substantiate this I would recall that even on the draft resolution submitted by the group of western countries — I repeat, the western countries — at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the question of a nuclear test ban, there were 111 votes in favour and one vote against, and that was the vote of the United States of America. And again, on the draft resolution on a nuclear test ban submitted by the group of non-aligned States, which was supported by 124 votes, the United States once more voted against. That is the essence of the problem, and we would therefore ask the United States delegation to take due account of this absolutely unique, unprecedented and, to say the least, extremely regrettable situation in which one State places its national security interests above the national security interests of the whole of the rest of the world. This is the crux of the matter with respect to the mandate of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The Committee has an important decision to take. In the last analysis, what we are concerned with is not mere words but whether the Committee is simply going to continue holding abstract discussions — and for how many more years — or whether it is going at last to do what the world community expects of it and draft a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Issraelyan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming chairmen. The Chair would, however, request the distinguished representative of the Soviet Union in future to address himself to the Chair rather than make remarks direct to individual delegations, as is customary in this body. I now give the floor to Ambassador Issraelyan.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): I did not quite understand the advice you gave me.

The CHAIRMAN: Then I shall be pleased to enlighten Ambassador Issraelyan. When you discussed after your prepared statement some remarks made by the distinguished representative of the United States, Ambassador, you addressed yourself directly to the representative of the United States. I think this is not customary in this body. Remarks are addressed to the Chair and not to individual delegations. Thank you.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): I have taken note of your helpful observation, but I do not see that I in any way violated the rules of procedure or the "customs" of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you Ambassador Issraelyan. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Grinberg.

Mr. GRINBERG (Bulgaria): Since this is the first time I am taking the floor in the month of April, allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you as the new Chairman of this Committee. I can pledge to you the full co-operation of my delegation in the efforts following the many important issues on our agenda. I also take this opportunity to express our satisfaction with the efficient manner in which your predecessor, Ambassador Ali Skalli from Morocco, conducted our business in March.

My delegation has already put forward its views on the substantive aspects of nuclear test-ban problems on a previous occasion. Now, I would like to explain briefly our position regarding the question of the mandate of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban.

Last year the Bulgarian delegation was directly involved in the negotiations on the mandate of the nuclear test-ban Working Group. Now, after the passage of almost one full year, we are surprised that this Committee has to face up to the same type of situation with which it was confronted in 1982.

For a long time now, the overwhelming majority of States here and in the General Assembly have been of the opinion that a working group on a nuclear test-ban should have an unrestricted mandate, if it is to elaborate and negotiate a treaty on this matter. One of the nuclear great Powers, however, with the support of a few other States, did everything possible to block such an arrangement: the results are well known. Having no other alternative, we had no choice but to agree on a temporary compromise solution, as formulated in the Committee's decision of 21 April 1982 (document CD/291). That decision, however, was taken with the clear understanding that the limited mandate was of a transitional nature. Even those who were responsible for singling out verification and compliance for special treatment did not deny that members of the Committee would be entitled to discuss any other aspects because verification could not be meaningfully considered in a vacuum. To confirm that the Committee's action was but a first step in a process of subsequent enlargement of the Working Group's responsibility, the mandate itself contained a provision that the Working Group would report to the Committee on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1982 session and that the Committee would thereafter take a decision on subsequent courses of action with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard.

Today we have an opportunity to arrive at an agreement on the enlargement of the Working Group's mandate.

Some representatives who argue against a change in the status quo maintain that in 1982 the Working Group did not resolve various issues relating to verification and compliance because, inter alia, the Working Group was not able to work on the basis of a structured programme. To this one could object in many respects. For one thing, the mandate of the Working Group did not confer on it the task of "resolving" issues, but merely of "discussing" and "defining" such issues. Apart from this, in spite of the absence of a formal work programme, the report of the Working Group is in itself proof that the Group was able, under the guidance of its Chairman, to undertake a wide-ranging, informative and useful consideration of the basic issues related to verification and compliance in a treaty on a comprehensive test ban. But, regardless of all this, could someone think that a wider mandate would in any way reduce the importance of the issues of verification and compliance? We believe that this would in no way be the case. A working group under a mandate which would enable it to reach a common understanding on the scope of the treaty, for instance, would no doubt be better equipped to solve the problems of verification and compliance.

(Mr. Grinberg, Bulgaria)

In the light of these considerations, the Bulgarian delegation would like to express its strong support for the enlargement of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban as of the beginning of its work at the current session. As a co-sponsor of Working Paper No. 95 submitted today by the distinguished representative of Mongolia on behalf of a group of socialist States, my delegation would like to commend the formula contained therein as a good basis for reaching a consensus decision.

We can, however, go along with the draft decision contained in document CD/181 submitted on a previous occasion by the Group of 21.

The decision we could take as a result of the consultations which are to be conducted is far from being one of a procedural or technical nature. The choice is between two clear alternatives:

- (1) To start at long last a process of serious and businesslike work and negotiation on the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty at an early date, or
- (2) To provide further opportunities for promoting an endless discussion which could only delay or preclude a conclusion on a nuclear test ban. Today, we heard from the distinguished representative of the United States a reiteration of his Government's declaration that it regarded a nuclear test-ban treaty as a long-term goal. The same position was previously put forward in this Committee by Vice-President George Bush. Taking into account all the options which the Committee has before it we should always keep in mind that on many occasions the General Assembly has assigned the highest priority to the question of a nuclear test ban because its solution is of key importance in the struggle to put an end to the qualitative development of nuclear weapons and to their proliferation. It is almost universally recognized also that the solution of all scientific and technical issues related to the verification of the future treaty has for a long time been at hand and that what has been lacking is a political decision by the leading Western nuclear Powers. There can be no doubt, therefore, that if this Committee is to give effect to the resolutions of the General Assembly and live up to its responsibilities, we have to opt today for the first alternative and secure proper conditions for the attainment of one of the most important and pressing objectives in the field of disarmament.

As a practical basis for the elaboration of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the Working Group would have before it a number of papers, including the basic elements of a treaty on a comprehensive test ban submitted by the USSR at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is looking forward to practical participation in the work of the Working Group in the future.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Grinberg, for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming Chairmen. I now give the floor to the representative of Czechoslovakia, Ambassador Vejvoda.

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to join those who have wished you good luck on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament for the month of April and express our hope that this month will be very fruitful for the closing of the spring session. We would, Mr. Chairman, also like to express our warmest thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Ali Skalli of Morocco, whose efforts contributed to the creation of possibilities for carrying out businesslike negotiations. Let us hope that we use these possibilities to the full. May I add how much I personally appreciated the fine words of Ambassador Skalli at the conclusion of our last meeting which showed clearly his wisdom and objectivity.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Today's plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament is dedicated to the discussion of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, which has been re-established in accordance with the Committee's decision of 29 March 1983.

Let me stress at the outset that it is the considered view of the Czechoslovak delegation that the mandate adopted by the Committee for the relevant Working Group last year has been exhausted, since it was too narrow and restrictive. In fact, it could become an obstacle to the elaboration of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, the adoption of which is urgently demanded by the majority of States.

The consideration of "verification and compliance" which took place last year in the Working Group convinced the majority of delegations here that the problem of the verification provisions of the future treaty, agreed on a multilateral basis, is basically solved, and that it is only political will that is necessary for the achievement of agreement.

The Czechoslovak delegation expressed serious reservations with respect to the mandate adopted last year. These reservations have been fully justified by the result, or more precisely by the lack of it, of the Working Group's deliberations last year. The restrictive mandate permitted the Group no more than a general exchange of views. The reason for this was that the consideration of "verification and compliance" was carried out in isolation from the specific treaty banning all experimental nuclear-weapon tests in all environments, that would be unlimited in time, that would envisage a generally acceptable solution to the problem of underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and that would be adhered to by all nuclear-weapon States.

We maintain, however, that last year's deliberations of the Working Group gave us one good experience, namely, that they should not be repeated this year.

In order not to go once more through what has already been done the Working Group should be accorded terms of reference which would allow it to undertake specific negotiations aimed at the conclusion of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

Last year my delegation, and, I feel, many other delegations as well, missed a sort of comprehensive document which would draw on the experience gained through more than 20 years of negotiations on a nuclear test ban. We note with satisfaction that we have that kind of document now. I mean the Soviet "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests". We reiterate our view that this document contains formulations which could well be used in the elaboration of the relevant treaty. We should bear in mind that the "Basic provisions" were recommended for consideration by the Committee on Disarmament by a decision of the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, which was supported by 115 States.

Moreover, United Nations General Assembly resolution 37/72 urges all States members of the Committee on Disarmament "To assign to the Ad Hoc Working Group on item 1 of the Committee's agenda (Nuclear test ban) a mandate which should provide for the multilateral negotiation of a treaty for the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests, to be initiated immediately after the beginning of the session of the Committee to be held in 1983". The same resolution further urges the member States of the Committee on Disarmament "To exert their best endeavours in order that the Committee may transmit to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session the multilaterally negotiated text of such a treaty".

Thus, a number of positive developments give us a fair chance to undertake specific, streamlined negotiations on the matter.

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

Firstly, we have a clear recommendation by the most authoritative international body — the United Nations General Assembly — to elaborate a nuclear test-ban treaty.

Secondly, we have the Soviet document on the basic provisions of a nuclear test-ban treaty which can contribute to overcome the existing stalemate.

Thirdly, we have the Ad Hoc Working Group, which has been re-established in order to fulfil this task. But the Group can only do it with an appropriate mandate, not only allowing for but in fact requesting specific negotiations aimed at the conclusion of a nuclear test-ban treaty.

The Czechoslovak delegation has on numerous occasions expressed its firm belief that verification provisions, if they are to be taken seriously and be meaningful, can only be considered inseparably with other basic provisions of a given treaty. Some delegations speak against the elaboration of a nuclear test-ban treaty in the Working Group, saying that the envisaged verification provisions are insufficient. My delegation fails to understand this approach since, as I said last time in my statement on this subject, the tripartite report on this subject matter addressed to the Committee on Disarmament in 1980 contains a verification system elaborated to a great extent. And the representatives of two of the countries which signed the tripartite report lament today over the insufficiency of verification procedures. To be more specific I mean paragraph 19 of the report which states:

"The three negotiating parties believe that the verification measures being negotiated — particularly the provisions regarding the International Exchange of Seismic Data, the Committee of Experts, and on-site inspections — break significant new ground in international arms limitation efforts and will give all treaty parties the opportunity to participate in a substantial and constructive way in the process of verifying compliance with the treaty".

The Soviet "Basic provisions" show rather clearly that the understandings achieved at the tripartite negotiations are taken into account. In this connection we would like to ask whether the delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom continue to adhere to the conclusion contained in the tripartite report.

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance we attach to the United Nations General Assembly's call addressed to all nuclear-weapon States, as a gesture of goodwill, not to carry out any nuclear explosions, starting from a date to be agreed among them and until a nuclear test-ban treaty is concluded.

The discussion on the subject-matter in the Committee on Disarmament showed clearly that the majority of delegations urge the early achievement of a treaty and are ready to actively contribute thereto. Those delegations speak firmly in favour of the expansion of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, which is about to start its work. To speak more clearly, and the urgency of the matter compels us to do so, we maintain that it is high time that the United States delegation listened to the demands of the international community, showed respect for the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly and stopped blocking the enlargement of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban along the lines of the draft presented by the distinguished representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Erdembileg, on behalf of the group of socialist States. We also hope that during this month the good atmosphere which has until now prevailed in this Committee will remain.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank Ambassador Vejvoda for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming Chairmen. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Mr. Nunez Mosquera.

Mr. NUNEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): My statement will be brief and I shall refer only to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, but I should like first, Ambassador van Dongen, to offer you the greetings of the Cuban delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament. We hope that under your guidance this body will be able to adopt decisions of substance during the last month of the spring part of its session.

I should also like to congratulate your predecessor in that office, Ambassador Skalli, on his accomplishments in the sphere of the organization of our work during the month of March.

A number of documents, both official and unofficial, have been submitted to the Committee on Disarmament on the subject of the mandate of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban. In fact, we have just received such a document, Working Paper No. 95, presented by the group of socialist countries. In document CD/181, submitted to the Committee on 24 April 1981, almost two years ago, the Group of 21 suggested a form of wording for the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group which leaves no doubt as to the functions of this Committee and the urgency with which we should embark on negotiations on the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests. In that document, the Group of 21 suggested the establishment of an ad hoc working group on this subject to negotiate (and that is very important) -- to negotiate on provisions relating to the scope, verification of compliance and the final clauses of a draft treaty relating to item 1 of the Committee's agenda.

No one can be unaware of the conciliatory character and the flexibility of this form of wording. Nevertheless it was rejected, in fact by a small group of countries which justified their attitude, as they are still doing, by the usual arguments about verification, in spite of the fact that that is no longer a problem as regards the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

There is, too, in document CD/259, submitted to the Committee by the delegation of the German Democratic Republic on 12 March 1982, a considerable element of flexibility. That document states that the ad hoc working group will be responsible for negotiating on a treaty prohibiting all nuclear-weapon tests, taking into account all existing proposals and future initiatives. That draft mandate also was rejected, by the same small group of countries.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the element that is common to those two proposals, and which was the main reason for their being rejected, is the reference to the fact that the ad hoc working group will be responsible for negotiating (and I stress this) -- negotiating on a treaty for the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

I should like to recall that when we were discussing the possibility of convening a special plenary meeting of the Committee to discuss the question of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, some delegations questioned whether it would not be a violation of the Committee's rules of procedure to limit statements by delegations to a specific subject.

Along the same line of thinking, it is legitimate to ask whether it is not a violation of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in three environments, of the Final Document of the 1978 special session of the General Assembly, of those same rules of procedure of the Committee on Disarmament and of the resolutions on the subject of the United Nations General Assembly, to impose, with a "take it or leave it" attitude, a mandate precluding the starting of serious negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

In the 1963 Treaty those same States which are now opposing negotiations in this Committee undertook to pursue them in good faith, whereas in fact they have suspended

(Mr. Nuñez Mosquero, Cuba)

even those negotiations that were being conducted with the Soviet Union on this subject outside the framework of this Committee, in spite of the fact that they had achieved considerable progress, as is clear from the reports submitted to this body. The Final Document of 1978 recognized the priority and urgency of the need to achieve a prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and this was reaffirmed in the Concluding Document of the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Lastly, the rules of procedure of the Committee on Disarmament state that the Committee is a disarmament negotiating forum, and that when there is a basis for negotiating a draft treaty, the Committee may establish subsidiary bodies and should provide them with appropriate support for their work.

In the light of all these facts, and in the judgement of many delegations, there can be no doubt as to the motives that led a small number of States to impose on the Committee on Disarmament a limited mandate for the Working Group on the first item on its agenda.

It is enough to recall that throughout 1982 many States pointed out how and by whom the Committee was being prevented from fulfilling its negotiating function, and that the present mandate of the Working Group, an unsatisfactory hybrid of previous proposals, which has, moreover, already been exhausted, was proposed and adopted only a few weeks before the convening of the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament, which was to make an assessment of the work done since 1978.

Now, when there does not appear to be anything in the near future involving a review of our work, the delegations which should be changing their attitude as regards the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests seem to be unconcerned about what may happen and are reverting to avoiding the starting of concrete negotiations on this subject in the Committee.

The word "negotiate" appears to be taboo in this connection, as it is with respect to many other items on our agenda, regardless of what the General Assembly asks of us. It is only necessary to look at what is happening in connection with item 2, or to remember that it took seven weeks to include a reference to the prevention of nuclear war in our agenda to see that we are right.

This is the reality confronting us every day, and we should let the international community know this if we want to fulfil the mandate that has been entrusted to us. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that negotiations of substance cannot be started in the Committee on specific subjects. There are General Assembly resolutions clearly indicating the activities we should undertake, and stating that the rule of consensus should not be used to prevent the adoption of appropriate mandates for subsidiary bodies. In our report to the General Assembly we are under an obligation to respond to these directives and we ought to do so. With a limited mandate for the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, the 1983 session is already doomed to failure, unless a flexible attitude is adopted by those who are obstructing our work so as to permit the initiation of concrete negotiations on this matter. It should be borne in mind that this is a subject of great priority, which also affects the adoption of the comprehensive programme of disarmament that we have been asked to submit by the end of this year, something we cannot possibly do in present conditions.

We hope that this situation will be corrected very quickly so that the Committee on Disarmament may begin without further delay actual negotiations on all aspects of a test ban treaty. There is a sufficient basis and sufficient experience for that purpose in this Committee, and all that is needed is to give the Working Group a mandate allowing it to start negotiations.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of Cuba, Mr. Nuñez Mosquera, for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming Chairmen. I now recognize the next speaker on my list, the representative of Australia, Ambassador Sadleir.

Mr. SADLEIR (Australia): Mr. Chairman, I congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee for the important concluding month of our spring session. Your long experience, many diplomatic skills and firm reputation for clear thinking will stand us in good stead in coping with the difficult issues of substance that lie ahead. May I, through you, Mr. Chairman, convey the thanks of the Australian delegation for the way in which your predecessor, the distinguished Ambassador of Morocco, Mr. Skalli, discharged his heavy responsibilities. In particular, I should like to thank him for the agility with which he cut the Gordian knot of procedural difficulties which had brought the Committee to a standstill for eight weeks.

In my statement today I shall address myself to item 1 of the Committee's agenda, namely, a nuclear test ban. For Australia, the achievement of a comprehensive nuclear test ban remains a priority objective. On 4 April the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Bill Hayden, in the context of reports that nuclear testing would soon resume in the South Pacific, recalled that Australia was opposed to all forms of nuclear explosions by all States in all environments. The Australian Government intends to support international efforts to bring about an end to all such nuclear testing through, for example, a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

In 1980 the Australian delegation was the first to propose a way of moving forward the work of the Committee on Disarmament on a comprehensive test ban by examining the institutional arrangements for the verification aspects of a treaty. In introducing a paper on this proposal (document CD/95), the then head of the Australian delegation, Sir James Plimsoll, called on the Committee on Disarmament to avoid a situation where, after there is political agreement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, there would be a delay of one or two years because no work had been done on an institutional structure to support the implementation and in particular the verification of such a treaty.

Can it be fairly said that the Committee has even begun to make a start on matters of verification, as the Australian delegation proposed? The answer, I am sorry to say, is in the negative. And yet some delegations suggest that we have somehow arrived at the end of the work we need to do under the heading of verification. They even go so far as to suggest that, by some miraculous process, the mandate so recently agreed on, and since barely applied, has been "fulfilled". How many meetings, in practice, have been devoted to the hard-won mandate? Of those that were held, what proportion focused on substantive issues rather than on the procedural, administrative and report-writing activities which tend to consume time in our working groups and, recently, in the Committee as a whole.

Those who have taken part in the Working Group will know that much of its energy during the short summer session last year was spent discussing a programme of work. The initial draft of the programme, prepared by the Acting Chairman of the Group, Mr. Hyltenius of Sweden, was balanced and fair, and prejudiced no-one's position as regards the Group's work -- much less with regard to the eventual text of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Yet the Working Group, thanks to a group of countries apparently unprepared to move forward towards an eventual test-ban treaty, ended up without any programme of work at all for the session.

It was only on 27 August that the Chair was allowed to present an "oral" work programme to the Group. Only three meetings remained in the session to give effect to this programme. If there has been a miracle, it lies in the fact that the Group accomplished as much as it did. Ironically, it is the same group of countries which blocked agreement on a programme of work that now suggest that the mandate has been exhausted. Such a claim is simply implausible.

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

Having said that, I should add that the Australian delegation welcomes the decision of the Committee last week to re-establish the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban under its existing mandate. In this connection I wish to place on record our satisfaction that a new Chairman, the distinguished Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Gerhardt Herder, has, by the same decision of the Committee, been appointed to lead the Group's work. My delegation will give him our full co-operation in seeking progress at the fastest rate possible towards a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

Australia is anxious, indeed impatient for progress in this area. We recognize that, in that respect, we are by no means unique, but we make an important point: the rate of progress is not always proportional to the degree of clamour for it, the pressure exerted for it or the size of the steps advocated. Recent weeks have shown that the opposite proposition is equally true. In February and March this year, the Committee was a sounding brass for fine sentiments and strong speeches in favour of big steps, and at the end of those months what, as an outcome of all that, is there to show the world? By contrast, the Committee has made a lot of progress at other times and in other circumstances.

Since we are now discussing the mandates of working groups, I need only mention the progress made so far in the chemical weapons Working Group, when we got on faster as soon as we stopped arguing about whether or not our existing mandate would permit us to do so. Thus, my delegation urges speed, and it urges speed within the present mandate. Any other course would condemn us to move slowly, if at all. That is the lesson to be drawn from the Committee's past history.

In my statements of 8 and 22 February I dwelt at some length on an important area of nuclear test-ban verification, namely, seismic monitoring. In particular, I drew attention to the steady and very relevant technical work being done by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts. As Ambassador Herder, in his statement of 3 March, pointed out:

"There is enough material for setting up the international data exchange system within the framework of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, and I underline a 'treaty'. The Group of Scientific Experts should contribute to such a treaty. It does not work in an 'ivory tower', neither should its work be regarded as an exercise in 'art for art's sake'. It is the purpose that counts".

I can agree with much of this. While I do not consider that the international seismic monitoring network can be swiftly set up on the basis of present material, I am convinced that work to that end must be linked to the objectives of the Committee as a whole. This indeed was the essence of my remarks on 22 February, when the report of the Group of Scientific Experts was tabled: I said then that "the Committee should begin to focus more acutely on the work done by this Group, and to consider its medium- and long-term relevance to the Committee's own work". Thus, I now formally propose, Mr. Chairman, that the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban debate the future of the Group of Scientific Experts before the experts meet again in July, under the existing NTB mandate.

There is much more to be done under the existing mandate. Last year, as others have pointed out, numerous items were put forward in the Working Group and were not fully addressed. At the same time the Working Group witnessed several interesting interventions and exchanges on matters which fell within its mandate. My delegation for example is ready, as no doubt is the Indian delegation, to investigate further the verification problems of peaceful nuclear explosions. More can be said, a lot of it technical, about low-yield detection.

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

I have already mentioned that Australia submitted a working paper in 1980 setting out some institutional, financial and legal questions that the Committee on Disarmament should address. Much of that paper remains relevant. However, developments since then, particularly the presentation of the trilateral report to the Committee and the tabling of a draft treaty by the Soviet Union, have raised new and different questions. My delegation is looking, therefore, towards issuing a revised version of document CD/95. Some of the major new questions that come to mind are precisely those which have to do with the institutional arrangements for a verification system. Both the trilateral report and the Soviet draft treaty mention a committee of experts. Will this committee concern itself only with the seismic system? Would it also deal with other means of detecting nuclear tests? Would a separate group be required, say, for atmospheric detection? And what about alleged violations and complaints? Would they be channelled through the expert group, if only in the first instance? Or would it be a purely scientific body? Would a consultative committee be established to handle compliance matters? Who, then, would organize on-site inspections? What role would the Security Council or other United Nations bodies or the Committee on Disarmament itself have in all this? Would a separate CTB secretariat be required? And how would it be established? There is a rich field here for further exploitation.

On the other hand, my delegation is not willing, although we are prepared, if necessary, to participate in a tedious political discussion which revolves around the question of "will". The matter before us is quite a simple one. Adequate or not, rich or poor, the mandate of the NTB Working Group is the only one we have, by unanimous agreement, and it is one which offers us a chance to do some real work. Some day we will probably feel its limitations, and wish to have broader terms of reference. We can hasten that day by getting down to work or we can put it off by choosing another approach.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Sadleir for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing Chairman and to the Chairman for the month of April. Before giving the floor to the next speaker, the Chair would like to rectify an omission in not having properly thanked the distinguished representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to the Chair and to the outgoing Chairman. This omission of thanks was more regrettable since the thanks addressed to Ambassador Skalli are so generally recognized as being well deserved. I hope the distinguished representative of Cuba will accept these belated thanks.

I now recognize the distinguished representative of Belgium, Mr. Noirfalisse. You have the floor.

Mr. NOIRFALISSE (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, I think that Ambassador Onkelinx will have ample opportunity to congratulate you on your accession to the chairmanship of the Committee and also to express the Belgian delegation's gratitude for the contribution made to the Committee's work last month by Ambassador Skalli. In the meantime, I will associate myself with those congratulations.

We are glad that the Committee on Disarmament has at last decided, after unduly lengthy hesitations and deliberations, finally to resume its work of substance where that was left at the end of the 1982 session.

The five working groups that have been established offer the best way of making progress on a number of well-identified topics. We ought not any longer to waste the possibilities which these tools afford us.

(Mr. Noirfalisse, Belgium)

One of the items for this plenary meeting is a consideration of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban. We are approaching this consideration without prejudice, for it is in accordance with the mandate of the Working Group, which requests the Committee to "take a decision on subsequent courses of action with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard".

The Committee was wise in deciding last week to re-establish the Working Group with its 1982 mandate. We believe that at the present time that mandate offers us the best way of approaching the objective of the prohibition of nuclear tests, and Belgium attaches the utmost importance to the attainment of that goal. It hopes that the Working Group will establish the necessary basis for negotiations to be conducted, at the appropriate time, with a view to the conclusion of an agreement prohibiting all nuclear tests. We believe that the present mandate of the Working Group is entirely adequate for that purpose.

It is important, however, in order that we should draw closer to the time when genuine negotiations are possible, that we should ensure the maximum chances of success for the Working Group from the present moment. To proceed otherwise would, in the present circumstances, run counter to the objective, because the entire process could thereby be disrupted. In establishing the Working Group last year, we indicated the first step to be taken. Our goal this year should be to take that step.

We ought to recognize that our work in 1982 was very limited as to time, and I can reply to the question put by Ambassador Sadleir: first, we limited our efforts; we devoted only 10 meetings to the Working Group; of those 10 meetings, seven were concerned with procedural questions. And the consequence of that is that, as concerns substance, we were not even able to agree on a programme of work which would have allowed us systematically to discuss and define the issues relating to verification and to compliance with a prohibition. The results of our work last year are thus very limited. It is enough to read the report of the Working Group to be convinced of this. If we compare that report with those which were drawn up within the framework of the first mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons, we can see that there is still much work to be done in the way of exploration, clarification and harmonization with respect to the verification of a prohibition on nuclear tests, before we go on to a more ambitious phase of our work.

Verification proved to be the stumbling-block in the negotiations that have been held in the past on the subject of a nuclear test ban, and in that connection I should like to say that I entirely agree with what our colleague from Poland said a few minutes ago when he stated that "one of the most complex and controversial problems which impede disarmament negotiations, and not only in the field of a nuclear test ban, is an adequate verification system". It is in fact good practice in a negotiating process to concentrate on the problems. To do otherwise would be to put up a smoke-screen, for we should be giving an illusion of progress while not talking about what is the essential element in the matter of a nuclear test ban, namely, the question of verification. If we read the various documents that have been submitted on this question, in particular the tripartite report and, most recently, the Soviet Union's proposals in document CD/346, we shall see that the greater part of the suggestions made, particularly by the Soviet Union delegation — 28 paragraphs out of 35 — concern verification and the provisions designed to ensure respect for the prohibition.

The States which in the Working Group last year felt it necessary — as was only natural — to refer to other matters connected with verification, and in particular the scope of the prohibition, had no difficulty in doing so from the outset of our work in 1982. Thus the present mandate is sufficiently flexible in that respect. It in no way prevents delegations expressing their particular concerns.

(Mr. Noirfalisse, Belgium)

In conclusion, we consider that the mandate has not been exhausted. It is far from having been exhausted. In fact it has barely been broached. We trust that the Working Group will be able, as soon as it resumes its activities, to agree on a method which will enable it to carry out its task in a rational manner.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of Belgium for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming chairmen, and now recognizes the distinguished representative of Argentina, Ambassador Carasales. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. CARASALES (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): I should like first of all to offer you the most sincere congratulations of the delegation of the Argentine Republic on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee for the month of April. I wish you every success in your efforts — I am confident that they will be successful — and towards that end I should like here and now to promise you the fullest support of my delegation. At the same time I should like to express the appreciation of my delegation for the brilliant work done by your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, who made prolonged and intensive efforts to solve the problems of the organization of the work of this Committee for the current year — with success, as we all know.

The position of the Group of 21 with respect to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban is well known, and I shall therefore be very brief. I should like to point out in this connection that I always speak of the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, which is the language specifically used in the Final Document, with all that that means. The points made by the Group of 21 in the statement it submitted on 24 April 1981, almost two years ago, in connection with item 1 of our agenda, remain entirely valid. That statement contained a draft mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group and we still think that a mandate of such a kind offers the only possibility for the Group to accomplish truly effective work.

It is a secret to no one that the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Working Group when it was set up last year was far from satisfactory to a large number of delegations. They considered that the Group would be able to make little headway towards the objective set in paragraph 51 of the Final Document when its work was confined within such narrow limits that it was empowered to deal with only one aspect, an important aspect, certainly, but only part of what should be a whole, and when at the same time it did not have the possibility of conducting negotiations but was merely, to use the words of the present mandate, to "discuss and define".

The experience of the meetings held by the Group last year proved that these fears were not unfounded.

We ought not to deceive ourselves. The mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban and the divergencies of views in this connection are really only a symptom of the differences that exist in the degree of priority which countries at present attach to the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests. Until a few years ago it could be said that there was a consensus on the urgency of the need to put an end to such tests, a consensus clearly reflected in, among other documents, the preamble to the Moscow Treaty adopted in 1963, that is, exactly 20 years ago.

I do not intend to go into the reasons justifying the need for a total prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. They are too well known and need no repetition. It is,

(Mr. Carasales, Argentina)

therefore, to be regretted that two nuclear-weapon Powers have radically modified their positions in this connection and now see the attainment of this goal, so ardently desired by virtually everyone, as a long-term objective.

In addition, two other nuclear-weapon countries, also adopting an attitude that is to be regretted, have decided to dissociate themselves from the multilateral effort towards this end which has been initiated in this Committee in spite of all the difficulties and restrictions. The reasons they have given to explain their attitude, although worthy, are nevertheless not sufficient, at least in my delegation's view, for their not participating usefully in the activity of a working group whose purpose is thereby directly affected.

Such a situation, in which four of the five nuclear-weapon Powers are maintaining what might be called a negative attitude with respect to such a matter as the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, about which the international community as a whole has no doubts, certainly does not encourage any optimism as regards the immediate future of the discussions being held in the Ad Hoc Working Group.

No one can guarantee the success of the efforts of a working group, nor can anyone deny the right of each delegation to express, in the group, its views, its perceptions of the problem and even its assessment of the priorities with respect to the item in question. However, it is neither just nor appropriate to subject the work of the group to such narrow and partial limits that the possibilities for its achieving anything worthwhile are thereby drastically curtailed.

If the Committee is fully to fulfil its responsibilities, it must give the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban a mandate that is adequate to that purpose, which obviously means the broadening of the present mandate.

That is the position of the Argentine delegation on this matter, a position that is obviously well known; but we wished it to be briefly reflected in the record of this meeting.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of Argentina, Ambassador Carasales, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to the outgoing Chairman.

Distinguished delegates, it is now close to 1 p.m. and there remain six speakers on the list; it will therefore be necessary to suspend the meeting rather than to adjourn. The Chair would propose then, that we suspend the meeting now and reconvene at 3.15 p.m. sharp this afternoon, if that is agreed.

If there are no objections, the meeting is suspended until 3.15 p.m. this afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 12.55 p.m. and resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The 209th plenary meeting of the Committee on Disarmament is now resumed, and I give the floor to the distinguished representative of Algeria, Mr. Taffar. You have the floor.

Mr. TAFFAR (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, the Committee on Disarmament has decided to place the question of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban on the agenda for today's meeting. My delegation is pleased at this decision and would like to make some comments on the subject.

Allow me first of all, however, Mr. Chairman, to perform the pleasant task of congratulating you on your accession to the chairmanship of our Committee for the month of April, and to assure you of the entire co-operation of my delegation in the fulfilment of your duties.

We should also like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Skalli who, with the skill with which we are all familiar, presided over the work of the Committee on Disarmament at a critical moment in its history.

For more than a quarter of a century, the international community has been trying to achieve the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests, rightly considered to be an essential measure towards the halting of the nuclear arms race. Unfortunately, the efforts made towards that end have not yet brought about the results hoped for. The tripartite negotiations, in which the international community placed great hopes, have been suspended. The Committee on Disarmament has still not been able to undertake negotiations on this question, which has the highest priority on its agenda.

It is, moreover, undeniable that the lack of agreement on the question of the prohibition of nuclear tests was one of the principal obstacles to the adoption of a comprehensive programme of disarmament at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Meanwhile, the pace of nuclear-weapon tests is constantly increasing, thus contributing to the acceleration of the nuclear arms race by making possible, in particular, the development of new generations of ever more sophisticated and more deadly weapons.

All these facts compel us to seek the reason for this absence of results, which is in stark contrast with the degree of priority attached to the question.

We are unfortunately obliged to recognize that the principal obstacle preventing the attainment of this objective is indubitably the lack of political will on the part of certain nuclear-weapon States.

The argument about technical difficulties put forward to explain the absence of results in this sphere does not appear to us to be very convincing. For while it is entirely understandable that certain technical difficulties might explain the lack of progress in a negotiating process already under way, the existence of differences of views on technical questions cannot justify the absence of negotiations on such an important matter as the prohibition of nuclear tests.

(Mr. Taffar, Algeria)

All members of the Committee on Disarmament are agreed in recognizing that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban that was set up during the spring part of the Committee's last session is limited.

My delegation was among those which expressed serious reservations regarding the adoption of such a narrow mandate, which in fact confines the Committee on Disarmament to "discussing and defining" issues relating to one particular question, that of verification.

We nevertheless agreed to join in the consensus that emerged on that mandate, considering it as a first step towards the negotiation of a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. This in no way affected our reservations as regards the mandate itself, which arbitrarily isolates one aspect of the future treaty from the whole complex of elements that should comprise it.

We see today that our apprehensions were fully justified. During the summer part of the Committee's last session, the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban found itself indeed confronted by the difficulty of discussing questions of verification without knowing the nature and the scope of the prohibition. The impossibility of reaching a consensus, if only on a working hypothesis concerning the nature and the scope of the treaty, prevented the adoption of a programme of work. Nevertheless the meetings held then had the merit of clarifying the respective positions of delegations on questions concerning verification.

My delegation considers that the time has come for the Committee on Disarmament to begin negotiating a treaty on the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests. We believe that the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group set up under item 1 of the agenda must be broadened in order to permit the Committee on Disarmament to carry out its task as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. It is pertinent here to recall that the Group of 21 submitted a draft mandate which may be found in document CD/181 and which, in our view, offers a sound basis for the formulation of a new mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group. We believe that the broadening of the Group's mandate would be in no way detrimental to the interests of the delegations which stress the primary importance of questions concerning the verification of compliance with the treaty. Those delegations would in fact be entirely free to give these questions all the importance they merit during the negotiating process.

In stressing the need to broaden the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, we have no intention whatever of minimizing the importance of verification issues. We perfectly well understand the concern of delegations to devise a verification system which will assure them that their partners are respecting all the provisions of the treaty. In any case, it is surely in the interests of all parties to the future treaty to make provision for reliable verification measures that will guarantee the strict observance of all the treaty's provisions. We are, however convinced that these questions should be examined, not in the abstract, but in close connection with the other aspects of the treaty.

At its thirty-seventh session the General Assembly adopted three resolutions on the subject of nuclear tests. All three stressed the importance and urgency of this question. One of them, resolution 37/72, urges the Committee on Disarmament to assign to the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban "a mandate which should provide for the multilateral negotiation of a treaty for the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests, to be initiated immediately after the beginning of the session of the Committee to be held in 1983".

(Mr. Taffar, Algeria)

We earnestly hope that the delegations which have in the past shown reluctance regarding the initiation of a process of negotiation on this subject in the Committee on Disarmament will show sufficient flexibility to enable the Committee to respond to the appeal of the General Assembly through a broadening of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

It is in large part the attitude they adopt to the question of the prohibition of nuclear tests that will indicate the degree of political will of the nuclear-weapon States with respect to the goal of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished delegate of Algeria for his contribution and for the kind words addressed both to the outgoing Chairman and the incoming Chairman. The Chair now calls upon the distinguished representative of Pakistan, Mr. Altaf.

Mr. ALTAF (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, Ambassador Mansur Ahmad will surely take a suitable opportunity to congratulate you on behalf of our delegation. In his absence, allow me to express my great pleasure on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee on Disarmament. I believe that at this important juncture, when the Committee is finally starting the substantive work of its 1983 session, you, Mr. Chairman, a composite personality well regarded for your erudition, diplomatic skill, geniality and wit, will make an outstanding contribution to our important task.

I also wish to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Skalli, for the skilful manner in which he was able to settle the problems facing the Committee regarding the agenda and the programme of work.

I have requested the floor to express some views on the question of a nuclear test ban. In doing so, I have a foreboding sense of history. Countless United Nations resolutions and innumerable statements in the last quarter of a century urging the cessation of nuclear testing have not brought us any closer to this highest-priority goal. On the other hand, technological developments and feverish stockpiling have in the meantime imparted an awesome dimension to the consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. The hitherto metaphoric references to a nuclear holocaust have been invested by the actions of a handful of States -- and primarily, two of them -- with a literal and real possibility of an apocalypse. Continued opposition to the banning of nuclear-weapon tests by this Superpower today, by the other tomorrow, is a double-edged miscalculation which eventually we may never have time to look back and rectify. Conversely, in time, its value may diminish to a level of insignificance.

Our agreement last year to a limited mandate for the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban was in the nature of a gesture indicative of the importance we attached to the commencement at long last by the Committee on Disarmament of the process for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty. We also had in mind the undertaking contained in the mandate that after the conclusion of its 1982 session the Committee would "take a decision on subsequent courses of action with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities". Our delegation understands the responsibility of this Committee solely in terms of negotiations, in this instance, on a CTBT. It would therefore be entirely justified that the Committee should be called upon to revise the mandate of the Working Group accordingly.

(Mr. Altaf, Pakistan)

The Working Group is at present mandated to discuss and define issues relating to verification and compliance. These issues have two dimensions, technical and political.

The technical aspects of a nuclear weapons test ban have already been adequately explored and examined by the seismological Working Group. The contours of an international verification system based on fully modern techniques of data collection and its proper evaluation have been very well defined. Of course we can endlessly argue on its capabilities. Each new day that dawns outdates the preceding day. The other option is to seize the hour and relate our present knowledge to the problems of the day. As a precaution, the CTBT could include provisions for an updating of its verification and compliance procedures in the light of later technological developments through review conferences or any other agreed universally non-discriminatory procedures.

Other aspects of verification and compliance issues relating to a comprehensive test ban cannot be fully defined, as called for in our existing mandate, let alone negotiated, without a prior agreement on the scope of the ban. That is the political aspect which indeed falls squarely within the competence of the Working Group. Nuclear technology has its peaceful uses and military application. Contrary to the recent Dutch suggestion, a fair agreement on the scope and purpose of the ban, keeping in view the requirements of the developing countries in taking full advantage of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to narrow the immense technological gap between them and the rest of the world will quickly pave the way to and help in the evolving of a mutually satisfactory verification and compliance regime for the CTBT.

These technical and political considerations apart, the existing mandate suffers from an internal contradiction. The Working Group has been asked to substantially examine issues which relate to the governance of the implementation of an agreement which itself is not envisaged except in the context of an unspecified long-range policy goal. It is obvious, first, that a truly substantial and in-depth examination of related issues, even psychologically, is not possible unless the negotiators are convinced that an agreement is actually intended. Such a work programme may be suitable to an academic, intellectual exercise; it is hardly fit for a serious negotiating effort. Secondly, even if a determined effort were to result in a consensus, its elements would surely become obsolete by the time, if ever, the issues defined by the Working Group are in practice related to a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Unless, therefore, this internal contradiction is resolved, our work cannot assume the character of a genuine negotiating endeavour.

It follows, then, that the problem is a lack of political will; its rationale is unclear, perhaps incomprehensible. It is frequently said that systems performance could not be guaranteed without recourse to testing. Notwithstanding the fact that it is predicated on the actual use of weapons, the argument has been discounted by eminent scientists on the grounds that a variety of methods were available to detect and remedy performance deviations. I need only refer to the Bradbury-Mark-Garwin letter of 15 August 1978 addressed to President Jimmy Carter.

(Mr. Altaf, Pakistan)

Notwithstanding also our manifest doubts about the theory of deterrence, one may ask: will the test ban in any way restrict or diminish the value of deterrence? Clearly not. A nuclear-weapon test ban will do no more than prevent qualitative improvements of existing nuclear weapons and preclude the development of new types of such weapons. That, too, if we ignore the possibilities afforded by advanced simulation techniques and laboratory tests. The nuclear arsenals, consisting of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, will continue to exist, perhaps multiply, even after the conclusion of a test ban. A mere 5 per cent of the existing weapons are said to be sufficient to eradicate all life on earth. The requirements of deterrence, or for that matter of equal security, will thus continue to be fully underwritten. Why, then, the reluctance to negotiate the ban?

A conceivable answer perhaps lies in the desire for the retention of technological superiority. Historic experience indicates too few compromises, at least as far as this question impinges on qualitative parity in weapons. The inevitable result of such an illusory pursuit is the continuation of the arms race. No particular subtlety of mind is required to conclude, then, that the opposition to the banning of nuclear-weapon tests is an indication of unwillingness to terminate the arms race and proceed to genuine and meaningful disarmament. On the other hand, even at this stage, a nuclear-weapon test ban will provide concrete evidence of the determination to contain, and perhaps eventually eliminate, the danger that these infernal weapons pose to the survival of mankind.

At the outset I referred to the history of the issue. No efforts have been spared in negotiations to achieve a nuclear-weapon test ban. The partial test-ban Treaty and the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty raised hopes, either by what had been achieved or by the commitments that were held out "to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time". Over a decade ago the Secretary-General of the United Nations himself declared that all the technical and scientific aspects of a nuclear test ban had been fully explored; there even came a time when the negotiating parties were on the verge of an agreement. Although this may now be a part of history, its relevance is undeniable. We cannot but continue to urge the fulfilment of commitments, whether these emanate from existing treaties such as those I have recalled or from a strongly held belief in a moral approach to issues of disarmament and security such as that recently affirmed by President Reagan.

Two of the most pressing issues in the world today are, first, the appalling economic conditions in the majority of the third world countries, and secondly, the nuclear threat to the survival of mankind. While the former unfortunately evokes little more than compassion and concern, the solution to the latter has been fortunately agreed upon by consensus in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. In the disarmament field a nuclear test ban, we are all agreed, is a matter of the highest priority. But that is not all. Along the path to real disarmament, it is the first step.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of Pakistan for his contribution and for the generous words addressed both to the present Chairman and his predecessor. While his predecessor is concerned, of course, this is now a fact; the present Chairman can only hope to be capable of living up to these generous expressions of goodwill. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of India, Mr. Saran, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. SARAN (India): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the delegation of India, I would like to welcome you as Chairman of the Committee for the month of April. Familiar as we are with your diplomatic acumen, professional experience as well as personal qualities, we are assured of an intensive and productive period of negotiations during the month. May I pledge to you on behalf of the delegation of India our full support and co-operation in the discharge of your duties as Chairman.

Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, under whose leadership we were finally able to adopt both the agenda and the programme of work for the current session, deserves our sincere gratitude and utmost admiration. Under his gentle and persuasive chairmanship, we were able to resolve several difficult and controversial procedural questions. He has thus laid the basis for fruitful negotiations in the Committee during the rest of the session.

My delegation would like to offer its views on the question of a nuclear test ban. At the outset, I would like to put forward India's position concerning the nature of a future treaty on a nuclear test ban. In our view, such a treaty should aim at the general and complete cessation of nuclear-weapon tests by all States in all environments for all time. It should be able to attract universal adherence and should include a verification system that is universal in its application and non-discriminatory in character and which provides for equal access to all States.

This is also the position adopted by the Group of 21, and in document CD/223 which contains a draft comprehensive programme of disarmament, for example, this is the nature of the treaty that is clearly spelt out.

However, the delegation of the United States this morning put forward ideas concerning the scope of the treaty on a nuclear test ban which are not in consonance with the position adopted by the international community on this question for many years. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the distinguished delegate of the United States, Mr. Chairman, to the preamble of the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963, which says:

"Seeking to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time, determined to continue negotiations to this end, ....."

It is also quite obvious from the passage I have just quoted that the position taken by the United States that it does not intend to engage in negotiations on a treaty on a nuclear test ban is not in keeping with the obligations it undertook in the partial test-ban Treaty of 1963. The position is also at variance with the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the provisions of which were unanimously reaffirmed in June/July last year at the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament. Paragraph 51 calls for the urgent conclusion of a treaty on a nuclear test ban.

So far, we have not heard one good reason for retaining the present mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban. There are those who argue that during its work last year, the Working Group was unable to fulfil its mandate because we could not get agreement on a work programme. That is a rather formal and unconvincing objection. My delegation, along with several others, was prepared to engage in a substantive discussion of verification and compliance issues relating to a nuclear test ban, despite our conviction that the available means of verification, both national and international, were already sufficient to ensure compliance with such a ban. However, to our dismay, we found that those very delegations which insist that the Working Group should first examine issues of verification and compliance were not prepared for a serious exchange even on these issues. Arguments that the mandate given to the Group has not been exhausted is merely a camouflage for the lack of political enthusiasm to deal with the real issues involved.

(Mr. Saran, India)

In the Working Group, we asked the delegations concerned, particularly those of the United States and the United Kingdom to elaborate for us what they regarded as "adequate" verification for a nuclear test ban. We also pointed out that the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts on Seismic Events has been operating so far on the assumption that the global seismic monitoring network they had been mandated to elaborate should be able to detect with 90 per cent probability events of bodywave magnitude 4 or greater in the northern hemisphere and bodywave magnitude 4.3 or greater in the southern hemisphere. We asked these delegations whether this capability and the probability of detection, which lies at the base of the work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts, is considered sufficient by them in conjunction with national technical measures to ensure compliance with a treaty on a nuclear test ban.

These questions, as will be recalled by those who participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group, went unanswered. Instead, the Group was told that the "adequacy" or "sufficiency" of verification was a complex question involving a whole host of political and technical factors. Despite repeated questioning, no attempt was made to clarify what this "whole host of political and technical factors" consisted of.

It may also be noted in this connection that the delegation of India attempted to elicit from the erstwhile trilateral negotiators information concerning the progress achieved by them in their negotiations on issues relating to verification of compliance with a nuclear test ban. The Soviet Union stated that all aspects of verification and compliance relating to a multilateral treaty on a nuclear test ban had been agreed upon among the three negotiators, and that only certain additional measures that would be applicable only to the three parties remained unresolved. The delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom challenged the Soviet contention but did not deem it fit to inform the Working Group of the specific aspects on which agreement could not be reached among the trilateral negotiators in the field of verification of a multilateral convention on a nuclear test ban.

In the absence of such clarification from the United States and the United Kingdom, the Working Group was naturally denied an opportunity substantively to explore unresolved issues relating to verification and compliance.

Given this experience of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban last year, which has nothing to do at all with our inability to agree upon a suitable work programme, we are entitled to ask those who insist on retaining the old mandate what they wish the Working Group to undertake under the old mandate. We have heard with interest the statement made by the representative of the United States this morning on the subject. He suggested that the Working Group should, in the area of verification, focus attention on four general topics. However, the four topics that he listed in his statement have already been dealt with exhaustively in the earlier consideration of the nuclear test-ban issue in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament during most of the decade of the 1970s. The same areas have also been explored in great detail by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts, which has been working on the issue of verification through a global seismic monitoring network since 1976. The results of these considerations are available to the Committee in the form of the various regular reports submitted by the Group of Scientific Experts to the Committee.

(Mr. Saran, India)

One may also draw attention to the detailed working documents put forward before the CCD by several delegations, including those of the United States and the United Kingdom. Not least, one may also take into consideration the reports submitted on the trilateral negotiations among the United States, the United Kingdom and the USSR between 1977 and 1980.

It is quite obvious that a vast amount of work has already been done precisely on the topics outlined this morning by the United States delegation. Unless we have some clear idea as to what the unresolved or pending problems are in this area, we cannot hope to proceed beyond a repetitive and academic exercise. It is precisely the refusal on the part of certain delegations clearly to specify what the pending problems are as far as they are concerned, which stands in the way of our making substantive progress. The same observation applies to the issues which have been raised by the United States representative with respect to compliance.

I would now like to take up some of the issues raised by Ambassador Sadleir of Australia this morning. The distinguished Ambassador of Australia stated that the Working Group ought to consider the institutional, administrative and financial arrangements necessary to sustain a multilateral verification regime for a future nuclear test-ban treaty. As we have had occasion to point out before, this is like putting the cart before the horse. The international community has recognized that questions relating to verification and compliance can only be considered in tandem with other aspects of a treaty. For example, paragraph 31 of the Final Document clearly states:

"Disarmament and arms limitation agreements should provide for adequate measures of verification satisfactory to all parties concerned in order to create the necessary confidence and ensure that they are being observed by all parties. The form and modalities of the verification to be provided for in any specific agreement depend upon and should be determined by the purposes, scope and nature of the agreement".

In line with this generally accepted principle enshrined in the Final Document, we cannot agree to the Working Group getting bogged down in a rather peripheral exercise while the central issue of negotiating a treaty on a nuclear test ban remains unresolved.

The subject may be a rich area for fruitful exploration, as suggested by the Australian Ambassador, but the Committee on Disarmament is not the place for such exploration, since it is not an academic institution but a negotiating body.

We are also skeptical of the suggestions made by the distinguished Ambassador of Australia that the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban should debate the relevance of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to the work of the Working Group. We believe that the question of whether or not the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts should continue its work is for the Committee to debate and not the Ad Hoc Working Group. It is in the interests of all delegations in this Committee to permit the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban to deal only with substantive questions.

(Mr. Saran, India)

The Ambassador of Australia also referred to the question of exploring verification problems as related to peaceful nuclear explosions. I am sure Ambassador Sadleir is fully aware of the very detailed exposition that my delegation made in response to queries from his delegation concerning this question in the Working Group last year. Our views remain unchanged that attempts to raise peripheral issues such as those relating to peaceful nuclear explosions seem designed to side-track the Committee from its aim of achieving a treaty on a nuclear test ban at the earliest possible date.

The above consideration has encouraged us once again to propose to the Committee that it ought to adopt a mandate for the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban on the lines recommended by the Group of 21 in its working paper CD/181 of 24 April 1981. The formulation, suitably modified, could read as follows:

"The Committee on Disarmament decides to establish, for the duration of the 1983 session, an ad hoc working group of the Committee to negotiate on provisions relating to the scope, verification of compliance and the final clauses of a draft treaty relating to item 1 of its agenda, entitled 'Nuclear test ban'. The Ad Hoc Working Group will report to the Committee on Disarmament on the progress of its work at an appropriate time and in any case before the conclusion of its 1983 session".

It is our conviction that such a draft mandate would permit the Working Group to explore all the relevant aspects of a future treaty on a nuclear test ban including, of course, questions of verification and compliance. As several speakers have pointed out this morning, questions of verification and compliance are inevitably interrelated with aspects concerning scope as well as other parts of a future treaty on a nuclear test ban. This mandate will permit a more logical consideration of the entire issue. Those who claim that the Working Group was unable last year to fulfil its mandate are the ones who refuse to answer specific questions directed to them. If, as they claim, the questions of verification and compliance must take into account a whole host of political and technical factors, then it stands to reason that we should have a mandate for the Working Group which enables it to do so. The best way this can be done is to charge the Working Group with the task of negotiating a treaty on a nuclear test ban in all its aspects.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of India for his statement and for the well-deserved word of thanks to the outgoing Chairman and his generous wishes of goodwill to the present Chairman. The next speaker on my list is the distinguished representative of Mexico, Mrs. Gonzalez y Reynero.

Mrs. GONZALEZ Y REYNERO (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor in the month of April, Mr. Chairman, I should like to begin by saying how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over our work. We should like to express our conviction that your great knowledge of the subject and your diplomatic experience will enable you to bring the work of our Committee during the spring part of its session to a successful conclusion. At the same time I should like to reiterate our congratulations to Ambassador Skalli of Morocco on the brilliant and effective way in which he guided our work during the month of March.

(Mrs. Gonzalez y Reynero, Mexico)

The position of the delegation of Mexico on the prohibition of all nuclear-weapon tests is well known. We have been stating it for many years, both in the First Committee of the General Assembly and in the negotiating bodies which preceded the Committee on Disarmament, as well as in the Committee itself.

I shall confine myself to saying that our position has not changed and that it will be that position which will inspire the "proposals" and "initiatives" which the Mexican delegation may present to the Ad Hoc Working Group, as suggested in the last paragraph of the mandate adopted for 1982.

My delegation's position regarding the question of "verification", which is given priority in the Group's mandate, is also well known. That position in essence coincides with the views expressed by no less a person than the United Nations Secretary-General as long ago as in 1972 when, speaking to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, he said the following:

"I believe that all the technical and scientific aspects of the problem have been so fully explored that only a political decision is now necessary in order to achieve final agreement ...

"When one takes into account the existing means of verification ..., it is difficult to understand further delay in achieving agreement on an underground test ban.

"... the potential risks of continuing underground nuclear weapon tests would far outweigh any possible risks from ending such tests."

It is thus obvious that my delegation made a huge concession in agreeing to that mandate, and this we only did, as the head of my delegation said in the statement he made at the Committee's 173rd meeting on 21 April 1982, because the mandate itself states: "The ad hoc working group will take into account all existing proposals and future initiatives, and will report to the Committee on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1982 session", and "The Committee will thereafter take a decision on subsequent courses of action with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard".

The Ad Hoc Working Group was given a very limited mandate which did not allow it to draft a treaty. We consider that that mandate has been exhausted and my delegation has therefore urged and will continue to urge that it should be revised so that the Working Group can conduct negotiations towards the elaboration of a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests.

Lastly, I should like to express the hope that the Superpower whose future attitude on this question will, in our view, be decisive, will show the necessary flexibility and adopt a position on the substance of the matter that is in accordance with the undertakings it assumed in the 1963 and 1968 Treaties and with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions on the subject which were adopted with its affirmative vote, as for example, resolutions 32/78 of 12 December 1977, 33/60 of 14 December 1978 and 34/73 of 11 December 1979.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Mexico for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming Chairmen. I now call upon the distinguished representative of Brazil, Mr. Duarte, to take the floor.

Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): Mr. Chairman, the head of my delegation will have the occasion to welcome you to the Chair of the Committee. Let me on this occasion simply pledge to you the complete co-operation of the delegation of Brazil and I would like also, through you, to thank Ambassador Skalli for the untiring and very successful efforts that he displayed during his tenure of the chairmanship.

The position of the Brazilian delegation on the question of a nuclear test ban and particularly on the need for urgent multilateral negotiations on a treaty to prohibit all nuclear weapon test explosions is well known to this Committee. I shall therefore refrain from a detailed statement and simply make a few remarks relevant to the current debate on the mandate of the Working Group established under item 1 of our agenda.

Brazil entirely agrees with the stand taken by the Group of 21 on this issue. The group position has been set forth on several occasions in a number of official documents of the Committee. My delegation intends to continue working constructively to achieve the start of multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This endeavour includes, naturally, the establishment of adequate and effective machinery for the conduct of such negotiations within the Committee. The mandate proposed by the Group of 21 would, in our view, enable the Committee on Disarmament to discharge fully its responsibilities in this regard.

We consider the present mandate of the Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban as too narrow and as too short a step in the direction of the solution of a question that has been thoroughly discussed by the international community as well as in closed quarters for more than 25 years now. But we do not share the view that the present mandate of the Working Group completely precludes the subsidiary body from undertaking any useful work. It is obvious that the Working Group could be immensely more productive were it allowed to begin forthwith negotiations on a treaty text. There is more than enough material available, including the "Basic provisions" recently submitted by the Soviet Union. We look forward to the presentation by the Swedish delegation of the revised version of the draft treaty it submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. We also note, in this connection, the statement made this morning by the representative of the United States, Mr. Busby, that his delegation does not have "any ulterior motives of avoiding reference to or discussion of other aspects of a test ban". All delegations thus concur that the Working Group's activities need not be confined in a straitjacket.

My delegation still hopes, however, that those who insist on treating a nuclear test ban as a long-term goal will abide by the formal consensus in which they participated together with all Members of the United Nations, and which they reaffirmed last July, on the utmost urgency and priority of this issue. We also urge these countries to reflect more profoundly on the binding commitments they have freely undertaken in international instruments towards the speedy negotiation of a comprehensive test ban, and to give more serious thought to the consequences that their hesitation and reluctance in fulfilling such commitments may have upon the future of multilateral disarmament negotiations, particularly in the nuclear field.

The resumption of the activity of the Working Group, under the leadership of Ambassador Herder of the German Democratic Republic, should in no way hamper the effort toward the revision of its mandate, as contained in the decision taken by the Committee last week. My delegation trusts that under your own guidance, Sir,

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

this effort will be strongly pursued, in accordance with the stated wish of the majority of the members of this Committee, both this morning and now in the afternoon. Some suggestions have been made at this meeting that my delegation is sure will be pursued and taken up later. By the same token, however, the revision process entrusted to you should not serve as a pretext for preventing the Working Group from getting on immediately with the substantive task at hand, in all its aspects, even with its present mandate. My delegation believes that speedy progress in the Working Group's discussions can at least be conducive to progress towards what is this Committee's almost unanimous desire, the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a matter of priority. We earnestly call upon those who still stand in the way of that goal to join all other members of the Committee on Disarmament, and for that matter the remainder of the international community, in that endeavour.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks the distinguished representative of Brazil, Mr. Duarte, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and incoming Chairmen. There are three more speakers on the Chairman's list and I am now pleased to call on Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom to take the floor. You have the floor.

Mr. CROMARTIE (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, I should like to begin by welcoming you warmly to the Chair of the Committee for the month of April. At the same time I should like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Skalli, for whose hard work in solving our procedural problems we are all grateful.

I welcome this opportunity to put the views of my delegation on the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban on record. In doing so I shall only go into the substance of the matter in so far as it is necessary in relation to the question of whether the mandate should be changed. But my delegation will be ready to enter into substance once the Working Group reconvenes.

In a statement on 14 September 1982 my predecessor, Mr. Summerhayes, summarized the view we took of the work which had been done in the nuclear test-ban Working Group during the summer session. Since that time my delegation has made further references to the nuclear test ban, in my statement of 8 February and in that made by the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Hurd, on 10 March. In his statement, Mr. Summerhayes said that the British delegation believed that the mandate of the Group was clear and precise, and that it would enable us "to discuss and define, through substantive examination, issues relating to verification and compliance with a view to making further progress towards a nuclear test ban".

The British delegation was fully aware that the mandate represented a compromise between differing viewpoints as to the possibility of beginning negotiations on this subject at that time, and that it was not considered satisfactory by a number of delegations. Nevertheless, it seemed to offer a chance of progress, because it concentrated on that issue which had always proved a stumbling-block to the successful completion of negotiations in this field, the question of verification. It had been our hope that delegations would, in spite of the limitations that they saw in the mandate, be prepared to co-operate during the summer session of 1982 in a detailed examination of the issues described in it. This hope remained

(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

unfulfilled, not least because of the unwillingness of some delegations to agree, for reasons which we still cannot understand, to the simple work programme which the Chairman proposed. Nevertheless, in spite of this procedural, and largely artificial difficulty, the summer session was not wasted. If nothing else, it showed us how different were the viewpoints of many members of the Committee and the amount of work which remains to be done to harmonize them.

It seems to my delegation that it would be difficult for anyone who has read the Working Group's report to claim that the mandate has been exhausted; the differences of view exposed in the report are only too clear. If further illustration is needed, it has been given today by delegations which have repeated familiar substantive arguments which we do not accept. Nor is it correct to suggest that there was any understanding between delegations that the mandate would be revised this year.

Let me mention a few of the differences of view that became apparent in the Working Group. It has been claimed that the mandate is too restrictive. My delegation have never believed that this is so. It has been claimed that the mandate must be enlarged to allow us to consider the scope of the treaty. We would say that if we are to discuss verification, we must begin by deciding what it is we are going to verify. If some delegations want to say that is discussing the scope, we have no objection; but we do not need to change the mandate to do it. We suggested last year that we avoid getting bogged down on this point by making an assumption that we should verify the absence of all nuclear explosions. But it quickly became apparent that a fundamental difference of view existed between delegations on this subject. These differences have again become apparent in our debate today. We believe that to try to reconcile these viewpoints is a matter of primary importance. It is one thing if we have to construct for ourselves a verification mechanism to ensure that no nuclear explosions are occurring anywhere. But it is quite another problem to ensure that nuclear explosions described by their authors as peaceful do not in fact provide a military advantage to those carrying them out. This does not seem to my delegation to be a peripheral issue. If other delegations have ideas how such verification might be possible, let them tell us. We see no problem in discussing this issue within the framework of the present mandate.

There was also discussion in the Working Group of verification using seismic methods. There was a general agreement on the need for a world-wide system of seismic stations with an international exchange of data, but not on many points of detail. The Working Group did not complete its examination of the characteristics of the system and its technical capabilities. It did not agree on the need for the use of modern methods of data exchange, nor on whether such a system should be set up before or after a treaty enters into force. My delegation had hoped that the spring meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts would help us to resolve some of these problems, but we are all aware of the attitude taken by some delegations at that meeting and of the procedural problems that hampered the Group's work. Other aspects of verification, for example, the need for more systematic measurement of airborne radioactivity, were hardly touched upon in the Working Group; nor were questions relating to on-site inspection, nor was the role of a consultative committee considered in detail. This is by no means to say

(Mr. Cromartie, United Kingdom)

that we wish to confine the Group to technical discussion, as has been alleged by some delegations; but we cannot see how we can make progress without a clear agreement on the technical foundations of our work.

Given the evidence of the Working Group report, we cannot see how it can reasonably be argued that the Working Group has fulfilled its mandate. We also fail to see how widening the mandate would help in resolving outstanding issues. The mandate already covers those key issues on which we must agree if we are to make progress towards a nuclear test-ban treaty. We are not convinced when delegations claim that all technical problems have been overcome, whatever authority they may quote; and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the object of some delegations in making such claims is to avoid any detailed discussion of matters which may not support their thesis. If some delegations fear that the mandate might be used to exclude consideration of proposals they have made or might make, let me assure them this is not the intention of my delegation. We are fully prepared to consider all proposals and to interpret the mandate as flexibly as possible to meet the wishes and concerns of all delegations.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Cromartie for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the outgoing and the incoming Chairmen, and is now pleased to call on the distinguished representative of Burma, Ambassador Maung Maung Gyi, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. MAUNG MAUNG GYI (Burma): Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express our felicitations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship for this month and it is our earnest hope that we will be able to settle the remaining issues of a procedural nature under your able guidance. I should also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Skalli of Morocco for the important contribution he has made in overcoming significant issues of a procedural nature which have a bearing on the substantive part of our work, which have proved to be more difficult to resolve this year than has usually been the case. Today my delegation proposes to join other delegations in the discussions concerning consideration of the mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, an issue which is crucial to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and which therefore deserves foremost priority as its solution is inextricably linked to the consideration of item 2 of our agenda. It may be recalled that the majority of delegations, including my delegation, have during the past several years proposed the setting up of an ad hoc working group and it was only during last year's session that the Committee was able to set up a Working Group whose mandate, we feel, falls far short of what is required, which is to conduct negotiations on a comprehensive test ban.

In accepting this limited mandate, and despite its shortcomings, my delegation, like many other delegations, entertained the hope that this would permit the beginning of a process towards the initiation of substantive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, bearing in mind that this Committee is a multilateral negotiating body and that whatever work we do here, particularly in the working groups, should reflect its negotiating character.

(Mr. Maung Maung Gyi, Burma)

Therefore in our consideration of the mandate it would be pertinent to ask ourselves whether it would permit the Committee to fulfil its essential functions. The first question is, does the mandate contain elements that would make it possible for the Ad Hoc Working Group to consider this issue in a substantive manner in order to facilitate negotiations on a test ban? In my delegation's view, the discussions in the Ad Hoc Working Group during last year on the subject of verification and compliance were of a general and unstructured character, for the element of negotiation is missing from the mandate. Secondly, in drawing up a mandate we should ask ourselves whether we are dealing with it in a way that will not restrict or circumscribe consideration of the subject by confining it to certain aspects of the issue only or preclude consideration of other equally important and related matters. If we take account of these essential principles, I think we should be able to draw up a mandate that will not inhibit the effective functioning of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

In the text of the decision adopted last year by the Committee relating to the establishment of an ad hoc working group on a nuclear test ban (document CD/291), due account was taken of the need to review the mandate, for the third paragraph of the decision, inter alia, states: "The Committee will thereafter take a decision on subsequent courses of action with a view to fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard". It is obvious to my delegation from this sentence that the mandate we adopted last year clearly recognized the need for a review of that mandate before the Ad Hoc Working Group begins its work this year.

In undertaking such a review we do not need to search very far, for United Nations General Assembly resolution 37/73 entitled, "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", and in particular its paragraph 7, should serve us as guidelines. The text of paragraph 7 reads as follows:

"Requests the Committee on Disarmament to continue the consideration of these issues and to take the necessary steps to initiate substantive negotiations in order that the draft of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty may be submitted to the General Assembly at the earliest possible date".

There is an interrelationship between the work we do in this Committee and the deliberations in the General Assembly which together form an integrated process of disarmament negotiations. The decisions reached by the General Assembly in its resolutions should serve as a mandate to guide us in our work, and it is with this thought in mind that I have referred to the General Assembly resolution quoted above.

At this morning's plenary meeting some delegations expressed concern that consideration of a more effective mandate for the Ad Hoc Working Group would hamper our work and that the Ad Hoc Working Group should continue its work under its former mandate. In this connection, we might recall that many delegations, in accepting last year's mandate, showed a flexibility of approach despite the fact that they considered that mandate to be inadequate for the purpose of negotiations. It therefore appears to my delegation that what is now required of all of us is to recognize the need for the formulation of an effective mandate that will enable us to conduct real negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Maung Maung Gyi for his contribution and for the kind words addressed to the Chairmen for the months of March and April. I now call on the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Lidgard, to take the floor. You have the floor.

Mr. LIDGARD (Sweden): Mr. Chairman, I had not intended to make a statement today on the subject of a nuclear test ban, but the discussion has to a large extent centred around the experience of the Ad Hoc Working Group of which I had the honour of being the Chairman last year. Before I start my comments, which necessarily are of an impromptu character, I wish to express my best wishes to you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship for this month. I hope this will be a very busy month, busy in a productive sense, and I am confident that you will use your experience and skills to make it possible for us to accomplish a maximum of results.

Likewise I wish most warmly to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Skalli of Morocco, on his success in leading us, through his unrelenting efforts as well as his admirable tact and ingenuity, out of the morass of procedural issues.

As to the question of a nuclear test ban, I assume that the position of my Government is well known. At the previous session of the United Nations General Assembly we went as far as to co-operate in the elaboration of both the major resolutions on a comprehensive test ban, because we wanted to use the opinion-building resources of the world Organization to the maximum extent possible. The Swedish delegation has already this year expressed its great disappointment that a comprehensive test ban treaty seemingly is out of reach for the foreseeable future. It is, of course, the prerogative of each Government to build its policy upon its own national security considerations. Still, my Government regrets that the nuclear-weapon Powers do not sufficiently see the danger that the rest of the world is exposed to, because of the ongoing senseless nuclear arms race. The peace demonstrations in the past few days in countries where the right of free expression of one's opinion exists and where such public manifestations take place freely and without Government direction bear witness to the fact that this concern is very widely felt.

As to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group, my delegation already last year expressed its dissatisfaction. My delegation will give strong support to proposals which aim at providing the Ad Hoc Working Group with full power to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty, such as the mandate proposed by the Group of 21.

As regards the accomplishments of the Ad Hoc Working Group last year, it is not for me, as its Chairman, to make an assessment. I have with interest listened to what others have said on that subject. However, I want to state that of the short time that the Working Group had at its disposal, too much was devoted to the procedural discussion. I am clearly disappointed that the work plan proposed by the Chair could not be accepted, although it was elaborated in order to meet all demands with equity. I cannot hide my conviction that insistence on procedural points is hardly compatible with a true sense of urgency to get to grips with the substantive issues. As to this year's work of the Ad Hoc Working Group, I want to assure the Committee of my delegation's profound interest in seeing it devote all its time to the substantive issues. I am confident that my successor, Ambassador Herder of the German Democratic Republic, with his skill and experience, will accomplish his task successfully.

My delegation's preference clearly goes to a widened mandate. Until that can be achieved, I have noted with interest the statement of Mr. Busby this morning to the effect that his delegation views the language of the present mandate rather broadly and that "in so far as any delegation holds a national position on particular issues which affects its own view of verification and compliance, then it should bring these views forward and discuss that relationship. We will have no objection". Indeed, my delegation will take that opportunity and present its views on the entirety of the issues connected with a CTBT. I can confirm that it is my Government's intention to submit a draft treaty on the subject, most probably at the beginning of the summer part of our session. We hope it will be considered as a useful contribution to the work of the Committee and consequently speed up the achievement of a CTBT, whether the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group this year remains the same as last year or, as my delegation hopes, it is widened.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Lidgard, for his statement and for the kind words addressed both to Ambassador Ali Skalli and to myself. I now call upon the last speaker on today's list, the distinguished Ambassador of Italy, Ambassador Alessi, whom I now invite to take the floor.

Mr. ALESSI (Italy) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, it is with particular pleasure that I greet the accession to the chairmanship of the eminent representative of a friendly country. I am certain that under the guidance of a skilled and experienced diplomat like yourself the Committee will be able to resume its work on questions of substance with vigour and achieve the progress we all hope for.

I should also like to associate myself with the sincere expressions of thanks which you yourself, Mr. Chairman, and the speakers who have preceded me have addressed to your predecessor, Ambassador Skalli, for the tireless, intelligent and effective ways in which he guided the Committee with such success through the difficult problems of procedure.

As a party to the non-proliferation Treaty since 1969, Italy is anxious to see the conclusion of an agreement which will prohibit nuclear tests for all time and in all environments.

We believe that such a treaty would be a key element in international efforts designed to bring under control the proliferation, both vertical and horizontal, of nuclear weapons. Italy, which voted for resolution 37/73 adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session, is also aware of the urgency of the need to negotiate a test-ban treaty likely to win the widest possible adherence among the members of the international community.

We are aware of the link that exists between a comprehensive test ban and the process of negotiation on the reduction of strategic and intermediate-range nuclear forces. The former would acquire its full importance within the framework of a genuine process of nuclear disarmament, and given a real prospect of a substantial reduction in nuclear arsenals. However, its unique value as a measure designed to prevent proliferation, as well as the special political significance it has acquired in the eyes of the international community in the course of the years, commend it for priority action.

The decision adopted last year to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on item 1 of our agenda provided the Committee with an appropriate framework for a consideration of the substance of this issue. That was an important achievement which had long been sought. It was accompanied by the adoption of a mandate whose content, while not satisfying everyone, was the fruit of difficult negotiations. For the purposes of the examination of substance we are called upon to undertake in the Working Group, the limits of that mandate ought not to be exaggerated. A broad interpretation of its terms -- an interpretation which was accepted by all delegations participating in the work and which was reiterated at the beginning of today's meeting -- in practice allows a meaningful discussion of all aspects of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In any case, questions relating to verification and compliance are of crucial importance. It was not without reason that a large part of the statement of Ambassador Issraelyan on 17 February last, on the subject of a comprehensive test ban, was devoted to questions of verification. The same applies to the statement made on 22 March last by the distinguished representative of Czechoslovakia.

(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

The discussion we have had at this meeting proves that the mandate agreed on last year still today constitutes a realistic reflection of the lowest common denominator existing among the members of the Committee. The mandate -- it is true -- is not a mandate to negotiate. While it is to be regretted that the political conditions do not at present exist for such a mandate, we ought nevertheless not to underestimate the importance of the work that can be done under the present mandate. This work will in any case have to be done. And we earnestly hope that under the chairmanship of Ambassador Herder of the German Democratic Republic, which we welcome, and with the co-operation of all delegations, it will be possible to achieve progress.

In conclusion I should like to say that although I understand the reasons why some delegations say that they are not satisfied with the present mandate and want it to be broadened, I do not, on the other hand, see the force of the arguments of those who base their demand for a broader mandate on the claim that the present mandate was exhausted during the 1982 session. The fact is that, despite the laudable and tenacious efforts of Ambassador Lidgard, the Chairman of the Working Group last year, no real start was made on fulfilling that mandate. We earnestly hope that that can be done as soon as possible and that the present session will give us an opportunity for useful and constructive work.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair thanks Ambassador Alessi for his statement and for the kind words addressed both to the outgoing and the incoming Chairmen. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this meeting?

Then, as Chairman, I can only gather from the statements made today that the main subject of discussion, that is, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban, has not led to a consensus for a revision of the mandate of that working group. However, we have now received a new draft mandate from the socialist group of countries and that, as well as the draft mandate proposed by the Group of 21, will be the subject of informal consultations. There are a number of other subjects which lend themselves particularly to informal consultations. The Chair would, however, prefer to give an opportunity to the various groups to meet among themselves before taking up contacts with the co-ordinators to come to an agreement on the dates and form of informal consultations.

Many speakers have underlined rightly that my distinguished colleague Ambassador Skalli has, by solving a number of procedural problems, laid the foundation for this Committee now to start work on the substance of its mandate and the Chair will, of course, do its utmost to make this possible, being only too well aware of the fact that it owes a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman for having provided this opportunity. It is also obvious that since we have spent nearly two months largely on procedural matters, although not entirely, the month of April is likely to be a busy one, and I think today's proceedings have amply borne out that we do need a fair amount of time to get something substantive done. I would therefore like to appeal to all delegations to observe, as far as is reasonably possible, the hours set for meetings, so that particularly those delegates who not only have functions to fulfil in the sphere of disarmament but also have obligations of another character are not too much hampered in fixing their daily schedule of work. If there are no further remarks to the Chair, the next meeting, the 210th plenary meeting, will take place on Thursday, 7 April at 10.30 a.m. The meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.