

(Mr. Rostow, United States)

In connection with another issue which has been under active consideration by the Committee during its past three sessions, that of the so-called negative security assurances, I would like to reaffirm the unilateral assurance given by the United States at the time of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament in 1978. As we said at that time:

"The United States will not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or any comparable internationally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear explosive devices, except in the case of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by such a State allied to or associated with a nuclear-weapon State in carrying out or sustaining the attack."

The United States stands by this statement as a reliable and firm assurance. We have nonetheless participated, and are willing to continue to participate in the Working Group which deals with this issue, and would join a consensus to re-establish the group. The United States believes that development of a common assurance, as has been suggested, would be extremely difficult, although of course we are not opposed to this concept.

The Committee's task of developing a comprehensive programme of disarmament, as mandated by the first special session on disarmament, is extremely important. We strongly support this effort and will continue to work constructively toward enunciation of a meaningful programme to be presented to the General Assembly at its second special session. The United States believes that to achieve the necessary consensus, such a programme must be realistic and must reflect the security needs of all States. It should provide guidelines for the actions of States, with an over-all goal of promoting world stability and peace.

Both the increased complexity of modern weapons and the turbulent condition of world politics have highlighted the special importance of compliance with treaties as a factor among the responsibilities of this Committee. Trust is an essential ingredient of the condition of peace. Montesquieu spoke of peace as a state of tranquillity in which no man need fear his neighbour. Alas, that criterion is not satisfied today in many parts of the world. None of the neighbours of the Soviet Union can say that it feels comfortable about the inviolability of its borders. And more generally, the expansionist policy of the Soviet Union radiates anxiety far beyond the States in its immediate neighbourhood, to States which fear the fate of Afghanistan, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the German Democratic Republic, or Bulgaria. Troubling questions have arisen about Soviet compliance with international agreements concerning chemical and biological warfare. Those questions affect every State in the world community. And they cast a shadow over the possibility of verifying Soviet compliance with treaties on the control of other arms, and particularly of nuclear arms.

In 1967, the International Red Cross published disturbing evidence about the use of Soviet chemical weapons in the Yemen. Now, initial circumstantial evidence that lethal chemical weapons have been used in Laos, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan has