

(Mr. Fields, United States)

view which are perhaps wider than had been thought before. Consequently, a great deal of work remains to be done even to arrive at a widely-shared understanding of the problem. In fact, the situation may be even more bleak. There are delegations among us who take the position that the Committee on Disarmament is not competent to deal with the material entrusted to Group B. Indeed, at least one delegation does not even participate in its meetings.

My colleagues, the time has come for us to face reality. Let us not continue to delude ourselves and the world community by pretending that we are making progress when, in fact, none is possible until we collectively decide to go forward.

There is another "linkage". Some delegations from the Group of 21 take the view that, even if a prohibition on attacks against nuclear facilities were to be concluded, a treaty prohibiting radiological weapons still would not be appropriate for the Committee on Disarmament. These delegations maintain that the most pressing issue facing the world today, and therefore facing the Committee, is nuclear disarmament and that, if the Committee is to be seen as a relevant body, it must conclude as a first endeavour a treaty dealing with nuclear disarmament.

How many of us here today believe that view to be realistic in the short term? There is no more complex issue facing the world today. My Government is sparing no effort to arrive at a solution in both the START and INF negotiations which will achieve a positive outcome. But should we hold all other progress hostage to these complicated deliberations? Delegations who hold this view are presenting us with a situation which is "all or nothing" and, therefore, preventing progress from being made on more limited measures which could contribute measurably to the security of all of us. I do not, in speaking frankly as I have, mean to deride the position of any delegation or any group, but I think it is a fair question to ask whether we are to continue along the same lines year after year pretending to make progress where none is possible. We should have a very frank and open discussion regarding these issues, which manifest themselves most apparently in the field of radiological weapons, but which are, I suspect, present in other areas of our endeavour as well. My delegation intends to raise this issue when we return in 1984.