

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

The joint statement also addressed the issue of the chemical weapons negotiations, an issue that is a direct concern and responsibility of this Conference. This issue, important in its own right, assumes added importance in view of the imminence of the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Preparatory Committee for which is even now meeting in New York. As we all recognize, later on in the first part of our 1988 session, the Conference will prepare a report for that special session.

Of all the items on our agenda, clearly the item of most importance for that report, and for our work in the coming weeks and months, is chemical weapons.

Our deliberations this week should be opening on a note of bright promise, enthusiasm and hope, reflecting the energy and dedication of the delegates for achieving progress this session. Instead, a pall of negativism and discouragement exists, in our opinion, which does not bode exceptionally well for prospects here. This atmosphere has been created, most sadly and tragically, by a series of events, agitated by the Soviet Union.

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