

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

My Government, in full agreement with the Final Act of Helsinki, has repeatedly urged the Polish leaders to lift martial law in order to re-establish the Polish people's civil rights, to release those who are arrested and to resume a genuine dialogue with the Catholic Church and legitimate representatives of the independent trade union in Poland. We also request that Poland be enabled to solve its problems autonomously and without external interference.

If these overriding requirements are met, mutual confidence will revive and the prospects for progress in terms of concrete results in disarmament and arms control will be substantially enhanced.

Grave as the events in Poland are, they are not the only threats to the international security climate. The military balance in Europe still gives rise to undiminished concern.

The Federal Republic of Germany therefore welcomes the fact that the negotiations here in Geneva between the United States of America and the Soviet Union on intermediate-range nuclear forces have been resumed after the Christmas recess. We are convinced that a positive outcome of these negotiations will contribute to greater international stability and progress in other arms control endeavours. We fully support the far-reaching American proposal -- thoroughly prepared within the Western Alliance -- aiming at a zero level outcome for all land-based intermediate nuclear missiles on both sides.

A treaty which honours this unique offer would eliminate the weapons category of greatest concern. We feel that such an outcome would be the most promising and tangible way of strengthening international peace and security. We welcome the commitment on both sides to spare no effort to reach agreement. In the same spirit, my Government attaches a high value to continued negotiations in this Committee.

Turning to the second part of my intervention, I should like to highlight once more the importance which my delegation attaches to the question of chemical weapons. In my country, a comprehensive chemical weapons prohibition is a matter of concern not only to the Government but to all political parties represented in the German Bundestag. On 3 December 1981, the Federal Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution urging the immediate conclusion of a chemical weapons convention to operate under effective international control.

Looking at the achievements of the Committee during its 1981 session -- and that means at the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons -- we can pride ourselves on having produced, under the efficient leadership of Ambassador Lidgard of Sweden, a considerable degree of specificity in what comes very near to being treaty language. However, progress is so far less apparent in the field of verification. But verification is the centrepiece on which the ultimate success of our negotiations depends and on which, therefore, we should focus particular attention during this year's debate.