

(Mr. Mellor, United Kingdom)

Our negotiations on chemical weapons could lead to a treaty of both immediate and historic importance. The use of these weapons by Iraq in the Gulf conflict has emphasized how urgently a total ban is needed. These weapons are a dreadful scourge that threatens the whole international community. Let us get rid of them, once and for all.

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The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom for his important statement and for the kind words he addressed to the President.

I am sure that all members of the Conference have learnt with regret the information given to us by the Minister of State concerning the departure of Ambassador Ian Cromartie, C.M.G. Ambassador Cromartie not only represented his country with outstanding diplomatic ability, but also served this Conference with distinction, having contributed significantly to our work on a number of delicate issues and, in particular, as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. The Conference will certainly miss him. I should like to ask the Minister of State to convey to Ambassador and Mrs. Cromartie our best wishes for their future.

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(Mr. Nguyen Di Nien, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam)

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Asia and the Pacific remains one of the most turbulent regions of the world. It is where for the past forty years the peoples have never really known peace, but instead have had to undergo a succession of the longest, bloodiest wars such as the Korean War, and especially the Indochina War and the Viet Nam War in which the biggest quantity of bombs and toxic chemicals, including dioxin, was used against the local populations. At present, although Asia and the Pacific on the whole has not as yet been militarized to the extent Europe has, the potential for its militarization is truly immense, and the consequences are extremely dangerous. Major nuclear Powers are situated here. Large land armies, navies and air forces have been built. In this context, the will of the peoples of Asia and the Pacific for peaceful co-existence, co-operation and friendship is growing stronger and stronger. We join many countries in supporting the initiatives of the People's Republic of Mongolia on non-use of force or threat of use of force between the States of the region; we support every effort to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, and South-East Asia, the South Pacific region and the Korean peninsular nuclear-weapon-free zones. Viet Nam strongly supports the initiative of the Soviet Union on the establishment of a general system of security in Asia and the Pacific aimed at consolidating peace, security and co-operation on the basis of equality and mutual benefits among States in the region.