

(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

The conclusion of a treaty on radiological weapons has up till now been impossible because complex problems concerning both the nature of our negotiating body as well as the substance of the problems pending have been bound up together. Last year we took our efforts as far as we could; each delegation now knows the extent of the compromises which can be made. However much one may wish to pad out a treaty which looks too slim, one cannot try to resolve in it problems that are only indirectly within its scope which it has not been possible to solve elsewhere.

With regard to the protection of nuclear facilities against attacks much work remains to be done before even achieving any widely-shared view of the scope of the measures to be negotiated; my delegation is ready to undertake that work here, without, however, rigidly linking it to the so-called "traditional" treaty which has reached an incomparably more advanced stage.

The conclusions and recommendations arrived at by the working group last year provide a basis for starting off again with fresh impetus. Once the Ad Hoc Working Group on Radiological Weapons has been re-established, a frank debate on the best means of progressing in this sphere, as the 1983 report recommends, seems essential.

(Mr. Luce, United Kingdom)

Rapid agreement should however be possible on a Radiological Weapons Treaty. My Government has been disappointed to see how little progress has been made in four years of negotiation in the Committee on Disarmament. A Radiological Weapons Treaty would perhaps be only a modest step forward but it would be one with a definite place in a corpus of arms control agreements. Unfortunately the drafts which have been prepared in each of the last three years have been rejected by a small group of delegations. We would see little point in repeating once again the same sterile exercise of negotiating detailed language unless we see evidence of a new attitude and a new approach to this subject. We hope that the Conference will provide the Working Group with advice as to the ways in which progress could best be achieved.

One major difficulty has been the linkage made between a Radiological Weapons Treaty and the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities. We do not accept that a convincing case has been made that the latter subject should be dealt with in the same instrument as a ban on radiological weapons; it should instead be studied on its own merits. In the first instance it seems to us that we should concentrate on an attempt to define further those types of nuclear facilities to which any prohibition might apply. We have given some thought to the possibility that existing international legislation might give us some guidance and at an appropriate time the United Kingdom delegation hopes to put forward some suggestions in this regard. We hope that these suggestions will be regarded as a positive contribution to this debate.