SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 31 March 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:  
Mr. JAYASINGHE  
(Sri Lanka)

CONTENTS

General exchange of views (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.
The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued) (PTBT/CONF/M/3 and 6)

1. The President pointed out that item 10 of the agenda would be taken up at the afternoon meeting, which would start at 3 p.m.

2. Mr. LUNA (Peru) congratulated the President on his election to that office and assured him of his delegation's support. He also welcomed the Vice-President and Secretary-General of the Meeting, Mr. Kheradi.

3. He noted that the Moscow Treaty signed in 1963 between the three nuclear Powers offered a ray of hope for peace. Peru had recently signed that Treaty, thereby demonstrating its desire for peace.

4. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, which had made Latin America a region free from nuclear tests, also served that same purpose.

5. The present Meeting and the Amendment Conference scheduled for January 1991 were the culmination of a process begun in 1985 by a group of countries. In the course of that process misunderstandings had arisen and some pressure had even been exerted. However, on the whole it could be said that there was a growing determination to secure a better future for succeeding generations.

6. In the view of Peru, the nuclear-weapon States should assist the States that had called for the convening of the Conference in their efforts to amend the Moscow Treaty so as to further curb the nuclear-arms race. The prime consideration in that connection should be that of global security.

7. It was legitimate to wonder to what extent the Moscow Treaty reflected the will of its signatories, given that there had been no reduction in the number of nuclear tests since 1963. Currently, the best way of demonstrating good will and genuine determination to guarantee a future free from the threat of nuclear war would be by signing a treaty instituting a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests.

8. Peru was in favour of amending the Moscow Treaty and would like to see it amended along the lines proposed in document PTBT/CONF/M/3, which had been circulated prior to the start of the Meeting.

9. The twin processes of détente and harmonization of the interests of the super-Powers in the area of general and complete disarmament which were now under way must be the motive force for a genuine transformation of international relations which would guarantee peaceful co-existence and co-operation between all States.

10. In conclusion, he noted that the transformation of the Moscow Treaty into a treaty banning all types of nuclear tests would be an important step forward in the context of the process of nuclear disarmament.

/...
11. Mr. ORDOÑEZ (Philippines) said that man, who was in imminent danger of destroying himself by the use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction or as a result of the ecological crisis caused by his predatory attitude towards the environment, risked suffering the fate of the dinosaurs, which had become extinct in prehistoric times. If it was to avoid that fate, mankind must adopt a rational approach.

12. To those who had long been striving to put an end to nuclear testing, today was an historic day. The Philippines had been among the first to call for a conference which would decide whether nuclear testing should finally be halted.

13. Reviewing past developments, he recalled that the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water had been signed in 1963. It had been followed, in 1968, by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Fourth Review Conference of that Treaty was to take place in Geneva in August and September 1990, and the fifth and final Review Conference was scheduled for 1995. Two later treaties - the 1974 Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests (threshold test-ban Treaty) and the 1976 Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes - had yet to be ratified. All those treaties were interlinked, but the idea of a comprehensive test-ban treaty was especially related to the non-proliferation Treaty. In 1963, countries had agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons if the nuclear-weapon States agreed to pursue negotiations on halting the arms race at an early date and on general and complete disarmament. That agreement was reflected in article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty.

14. While the non-nuclear weapon States had lived up to their part of the bargain, the nuclear-weapon States had yet to live up to theirs. That was a matter which would have to be thrashed out at the next Review Conference. It was clear, however, that the best way of strengthening the non-proliferation régime would be by establishing a comprehensive ban on tests.

15. The threshold test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes had been overtaken by technological innovation and, in the final analysis, had not contributed to a comprehensive test ban.

16. In order to ensure the success of the forthcoming meetings, the current Meeting would have to decide a series of issues which were primarily organizational in nature.

17. With regard to the decision-making process, his delegation was in favour of adopting decisions by consensus. However, in the absence of consensus, decisions must be taken by a simple majority of those present and voting. Those abstaining should not be considered as voting.

18. His delegation supported the suggestion of establishing committees to deal with verification, peaceful nuclear explosions and achieving universal adherence to a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In the view of the Philippines, each committee should prepare a progress report for submission to the Conference in January 1991.
(Mr. Ordoñez, Philippines)

His delegation also believed that additional committees should be established during the Conference as the need arose. His delegation intended to participate actively in the work of one or more of the committees.

19. The Secretariat should be asked to prepare several background papers which would be distributed to participants well before the January 1991 Conference. The topics covered could include such issues as review and analysis of the role of a comprehensive test ban in the cessation of the arms race; a chronological list of nuclear-weapons tests carried out since the partial test-ban Treaty came into force; implications of the nuclear-arms race and the development of new weapons systems, including weapons launched from the sea and from outer space; impact of nuclear tests on the environment; verification; and relationship between a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

20. In the view of the Philippines, participants should refrain from actions that were contrary to the goals and purposes of the conference while the latter was in session. Such measures as moratoriums on nuclear-weapons tests should be encouraged.

21. He observed that the current Meeting coincided with the summit meeting between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in Washington, with the encouraging prospect of a declaration by them regarding a treaty reducing nuclear-missile arsenals by 30 per cent as well as an end to chemical-weapons production and a sharp reduction of chemical stocks. The Disarmament Commission was also concluding its 1990 session, during which, in contrast to previous years, the Commission had been able to conclude all items on its agenda except one for which continuation had been agreed on at the very beginning of the session. The Commission had also been able to institute a programme of reform which would make it a more effective body, and had taken the decision to declare the 1990s the Third Disarmament Decade.

22. He noted that, during the planning for the forthcoming Conference, various arguments had been put forward as to why it should not take place. One argument had been that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva was the sole negotiating multilateral forum on disarmament. However, his delegation believed that the Conference on Disarmament should be allowed to continue its work on a treaty banning chemical weapons, now so close to agreement. His delegation also believed that the number of States parties to the Partial Test Ban Treaty - 118 as opposed to the 40 in the Conference on Disarmament - was more representative. Among such States were those considered to be "nuclear threshold" countries. An agreement on amending the Partial Test Ban Treaty would also strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty and would be the only way to save it.

23. He noted that at the time of signature of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, it had been understood that the Treaty was only a temporary measure which should logically culminate in a comprehensive test ban. Some now said, in retrospect, that a complete test ban would have been possible in the 1940s and 1950s, when only a few had possessed the knowledge to make nuclear weapons, and the number of such weapons had been relatively small. Now, in the 1990s, there was another chance to halt the spread of nuclear weapons.

/...
24. Mr. DON MACKAY (New Zealand) said that his delegation, too, totally opposed nuclear testing and fully supported a complete test ban. The parties to the Treaty should now be laying the groundwork for the Amendment Conference to be held in January 1991. It was important for the Conference to provide a proper forum for a broad-ranging discussion and for an in-depth exchange of views on all matters relating to testing, since the Conference on Disarmament had itself so far failed to provide such a forum. On the other hand, it must be remembered that not all nuclear-testing States would be involved in the discussions at the Amendment Conference. Regrettably, some testing States remained outside the ambit of that Treaty and would not be participants in the discussions.

25. The issues which his delegation had in mind included the historical context in which the Treaty had been signed in 1963, the implementation of the Treaty as drafted, and its effectiveness in fulfilling the purposes seen for it 27 years earlier. Other issues involved in a ban on nuclear testing included verification. That had been a major obstacle in the past, but progress had recently been made on that matter between the United States and the Soviet Union.

26. He noted that there was clearly a need to provide useful background documentation for delegations at the Conference. The cost must, however, be balanced against utility. Some documents listed in the working paper PTBT/CONF/M/6 could be prepared by the Secretariat without too much difficulty; others, however, would involve considerable effort and deftness in adequately balancing the different views. It was also important to ascertain that the information was not already available in documents prepared for other conferences. In addition, it was to be hoped that the results of the studies being carried out by various United Nations expert working groups on nuclear weapons and testing would be available by January 1991.

27. There was also a need to draft the rules of procedure for the Conference. In 1985 the Secretary-General had submitted extremely detailed draft standard rules of procedure for United Nations conferences (A/40/611). However, they went into too much detail for the forthcoming Conference. It might be possible instead to take as a starting-point the rules of procedure drawn up for the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Sea-bed Treaty, held in September 1989. His delegation would also support provision for non-governmental organizations to observe the Conference. He suggested the establishment of an open-ended working group on the rules of procedure which would report back to the plenary later at the current Meeting.

28. Mr. DUARTE (Brazil) said that the participation of his country in the Meeting stemmed from the importance it attached to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. The Brazilian delegation to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly had voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by a number of parties to the Treaty aimed at amending that instrument by extending the scope of the prohibition contained in article I, paragraphs 1 and 2.
29. Brazil was also a party to the 1967 Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco). In his delegation's view, any progress towards ending all nuclear-test explosions must be compatible with article 18 of that Treaty. The Ad Hoc Group of Experts on a nuclear-test ban of the Conference on Disarmament should have an appropriate negotiating mandate, since that Conference was the only multilateral negotiating body of the international community in the disarmament field. Brazil further considered that the five nuclear-weapon Powers should engage in negotiations for the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Continued testing - even underground - had detrimental effects on the environment, and also fuelled the quantitative and qualitative arms race.

30. He emphasized that the arrangements arrived at for financing the current Meeting and the forthcoming Conference should not be taken as a precedent, since multilateral progress on any matter, let alone disarmament, would be made immensely more difficult if each party to an agreement were allowed to decide unilaterally the ground rules applying to the administrative aspects of each instrument. The practice of using the United Nations scale of assessments as a basis for financial arrangements for conferences of that kind was a sound one, even if the scale was far from perfect. That scale was the result of the collective will of the membership of the Organization, rather than the product of the individual wishes of delegations.

31. Mr. PEJIC (Yugoslavia) noted that the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban had been a subject of international negotiations and discussion over a number of years. At the first summit conference of non-aligned countries, held in Belgrade in 1961, it had been considered essential to conclude an agreement on the prohibition of all nuclear and thermonuclear tests. Some 30 years later, that argument remained valid. However, in spite of numerous efforts, such a treaty was still out of reach; instead, nuclear tests and proliferation had gone on unabated and the destructive power of nuclear arms had reached unimaginable proportions.

32. The 1963 partial test-ban Treaty was the first international treaty of world-wide scope in the field of nuclear-arms limitation. The Treaty had contributed to the establishment of a more favourable international climate for agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, that had not slowed down the nuclear-arms race between the two major nuclear Powers and had not had a substantial effect on the consideration of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty at the bilateral, trilateral or multilateral level.

33. Those were the reasons that, among others, had inspired the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Yugoslavia to initiate efforts to amend the partial test-ban Treaty in accordance with its provisions. In that connection, mention should be made of the role played in those efforts by the Parliamentarians for Global Action. It should be realized that halting the qualitative nuclear-arms race through a comprehensive test-ban treaty, not reductions in nuclear weapons, would guarantee the vertical and horizontal non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote the full and comprehensive implementation of the most important provisions of the non-proliferation Treaty.
34. A number of problems had arisen in preparing for the Meeting. One of them related to the financing of the Conference and the method of cost-sharing. In his delegation's view, the only logical way would have been the customary method of financing conferences in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessments. Nevertheless, the compromise formula that had been worked out reflected the participants' desire and hope that the Conference would contribute to the overall efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament. The agreement reached, however, could in no way serve as a precedent for financing similar international conferences in the future.

35. In conclusion, he expressed confidence that his delegation and those of the non-aligned and other countries would do everything possible to ensure the successful completion of the Meeting.

36. Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said the goal of a complete and comprehensive nuclear test ban had inspired the efforts of the international community for more than three decades. The 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water was the most important step towards a complete and comprehensive test ban. Universal accession by States, including all countries possessing nuclear weapons, would be a major step towards strengthening the Treaty's régime. A complete and comprehensive nuclear-test ban was a major priority of the international community in efforts to achieve disarmament because its practical implementation would make it possible to halt the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, have a positive ecological effect and exert a normalizing influence on the international situation in general.

37. The goal of a complete and comprehensive test ban was so important that all possible channels should be used to make progress towards achieving it. That could include bilateral negotiations, the joint efforts of all nuclear Powers, and broader international efforts in various forms. In that connection, beginning the practical work on the substance of the question of a nuclear-test ban within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament could be a major step in the right direction.

38. The step-by-step bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States in that field were a vitally important factor. The preparation of the protocols on verification, which would make it possible to ratify the well-known 1974 and 1975 Soviet-American treaties on the limitation of underground nuclear-weapon tests and on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes was in its final stage. At the current time, it would be important to continue the negotiations on further limiting the yield and number of nuclear tests. He hoped that the meeting taking place between the Presidents of the Soviet Union and the United States would ensure progress in that area also.
(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

39. A test moratorium could play a major positive role in achieving the goal of a test ban. The well-known Soviet nuclear-test moratorium, which had lasted a year and a half, was a demonstration of the sense of great responsibility on the part of a nuclear Power. The readiness which was regularly reaffirmed by the Soviet Union to resume the moratorium at any time on a mutual basis with the United States maintained the possibility of a moratorium by the two major Powers.

40. Making the 1963 Treaty a comprehensive instrument was a major and unorthodox way of achieving the long sought after goal of a complete nuclear-test ban. The Byelorussian SSR favoured that approach together with the continuation of efforts in other possible areas. That approach should be given careful consideration and the upcoming Amendment Conference provided suitable opportunities for doing so. Precisely that orientation for the Conference should be the basis for taking decisions relating to its organization.

41. Mr. Uribe de Lozano (Colombia) said that it had been thought for more than 30 years that a comprehensive nuclear-test ban would be the most effective way to halt the nuclear-arms race.

42. The Amendment Conference was a logical continuation of the United Nations activities in that area. Although the signing of the Moscow Treaty had also been in accordance with that goal, the failure of attempts to achieve a comprehensive nuclear-test ban had led to a continuation of the arms race and increased the destructive force of nuclear weapons.

43. He referred to numerous General Assembly resolutions aimed at preventing the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. The attention of the nuclear Powers had repeatedly been drawn to their particular responsibility in that connection. At the current time, the authority of any treaty in the field of disarmament was diminished if it did not provide for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. It was now obvious that a refusal by any State possessing nuclear weapons to accept an amendment to the Moscow Treaty could be viewed as clear evidence of the intention of that State to continue to develop nuclear-weapons systems. The international community should not limit itself to treaties which provided for only cosmetic changes and failed to eliminate the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

44. In his view, the Amendment Conference would be a concrete expression of the desire of peoples throughout the world to halt the nuclear-arms race.

45. The President announced that the speakers' list was closed. Since there were no speakers scheduled for the afternoon meeting on 1 July, he suggested that that meeting should be devoted to the consideration of agenda item 10. There were 17 speakers scheduled for the morning meeting to be held on Monday. If all those who wished to take the floor would not be able to do so at that meeting, he suggested that they should be given the opportunity to speak at the afternoon meeting. If there were no objections, he would take it that the participants in the Meeting agreed to that suggestion.

46. It was so decided.
47. The President said, in addition, that the meeting to be held that afternoon would deal with organizational matters and, therefore, in accordance with rule 1 of the draft rules of procedure, there would be no summary records or press releases, which were provided for under rule 7 of those rules.

48. It was so decided.

49. Mr. KHERADI (Secretary-General of the Meeting) requested those delegations that had not yet submitted lists of participants to do so either by the end of the current week or at the beginning of the next.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.