



VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic)

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Statements were made by:

Mr. Hong (Singapore)
Mr. Vraalsen (Norway)
Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya (Zaire)
Mr. Roche (Canada)
Mr. Bouziri (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 46 TO 65 AND 144 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. HONG (Singapore): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other officers on your election as Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur. We note that the Bureau strikes an ideal balance of German efficiency, Japanese harmony, Canadian impartiality and Burkina Faso uprightness.

That international character reminds me of a story from the Second World War. There was a group of soldiers, two Oriental and one Western, members of the Allied forces, walking along a jungle path on patrol. Suddenly they came to a bridge across a stream. The two Orientals inexplicably began bowing to each other, each cordially inviting the other to precede him. This went on for about half an hour. The Western soldier was at first amused, then bemused, then confused. Finally he became impatient. He said, "Since neither of you can agree to proceed, I shall go ahead." With that, he strode onto the bridge and, alas, went up in an explosion. He had triggered a booby-trap.

The point of the story is simply that there is a need for patience and caution when facing unknown and potentially dangerous situations. This Committee is charged with the heavy responsibility of convincing nations either to disarm or to reduce their national means of protection and survival. We must therefore expect to spend a long time in this noble effort, probably decades. Millions of pages and thousands of resolutions will be composed in the effort to beat swords into ploughshares. Essentially, what we are saying is, "After you," and the echo is always, "No, no: after you." As our martial arts instructors always tell us, watch the eyes, not the words. We know the intention is found in the eyes, so we always need to look behind the resolutions for the motives.

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

Small States such as Singapore face particularly acute problems of security. We are not the prime movers; the great Powers are. For us the framework of global and regional security is a "given". We are not and never will be nuclear Powers. We understand that the central nuclear balance is basically determined by the two super-Powers and other nuclear nations. Nuclear disarmament is therefore a function of the relations between those great Powers.

That does not mean, however, that small States should sit idly by and watch while the great Powers negotiate. The rest of the world constitutes the gallery of public opinion, to which the nuclear Powers are accountable for the safety of the planet Earth and the natural environment. While world opinion is a nebulous thing, it is nevertheless effective when great Powers feel the need to be understood, to be supported and to enjoy approval. No nation is an island, sufficient unto itself. That holds true even for great Powers.

Thus, it behoves small States like Singapore to understand what is going on, to analyse and follow trends, to add whatever small pressure we can in the pursuit of world disarmament and, in our own national and internal actions, to behave responsibly. We view with regret a certain South-East Asian country that has a very low standard of living and is oppressed by poverty and underdevelopment, and yet possesses an army of 1 million men, is heavily armed, and commits aggression against and occupies nations which are even smaller, poorer and more defenceless than itself, such as Kampuchea.

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

To such a nation, our message is very simple. To it, we say: Your security is not to be found in armed violence, neither in oppressing others. Your security cannot be established at the expense of the insecurity of others. Violence begets violence; it is more productive to negotiate whatever problems exist, as spelt out in the United Nations Charter. Ultimately, you are the loser, because you have lost time for development whilst other nations are racing ahead, and you are becoming dependent on the supplier of your arms, thereby opening yourself to outside influence.

In our opinion, therefore, smaller nations should behave responsibly in the international network of relations and obligations. Each of us should arrange our own internal affairs so as to minimize excuses for external Powers to interfere. Each of us should assiduously exercise the art of good-neighbourliness. As the American poet Robert Frost said, "Good fences make good neighbours". Thus, each of us must understand our regional responsibilities and strive continuously to develop friendly and co-operative relations with our neighbours.

In this context, Singapore is aware of its international obligations to disarmament and world security. Our beliefs are demonstrated in our signatures on the following treaties: the Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water of 1963; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) of 1968; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and Ocean Floor and in the Sub-soil thereof, 1971; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction of 1972 and the Agreement for the Application of Safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and Protocol of 1977.

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

We are studying other international agreements and, in due course, we shall be acceding to those relevant and applicable conventions. We are also, as part of our regional responsibility, studying, together with our colleagues members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. Similarly, we support various United Nations resolutions on arms control and disarmament discussed in the First Committee, according to our criteria of seriousness, balance and fairness, applicability and non-compromise of our national security and that of our friends and allies.

Here, we should like to state that we are disappointed that the United Nations Disarmament Commission has been unable to conclude its consideration of the review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it in General Assembly resolution 40/94 O, which was the initiative of a group of African States. We urge that at its next substantive session in 1987 the Disarmament Commission expeditiously conclude its consideration of that item, which is at the core of the United Nations primary responsibility in the field of disarmament. We hope that the Commission will submit its findings and recommendations on this important issue to the General Assembly in 1987.

We also welcome the establishment of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. We think that, operating under the mandate entrusted to it in General Assembly resolution 40/151 G, the Centre can indeed make a useful contribution to the cause of peace in that region. It is, we believe, a major step and will lead to arrangements that will give rise to confidence and security building measures and disarmament on the subregional and regional levels.

In 1984 the Singapore representative in the First Committee addressed the issue of the central nuclear balance and its impact on the third world. In 1985 my

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

predecessor addressed the issue of conventional weapons. He pointed out that more than 150 armed conflicts have occurred since 1945, costing perhaps 20 million lives, creating 8 million refugees and resulting in untold damage to property and the environment. He stressed that the cost of the conventional arms race has increased, in constant 1981 prices, from \$20.3 billion in 1972 to \$34.3 billion in 1982. Of the \$800 billion spent in 1983 on military activities, at least 80 per cent was absorbed by conventional arms and armed forces. The world's armed forces are estimated to total more than 25 million personnel and to possess over 140,000 main battle tanks, over 35,000 combat aircraft, 21,000 helicopters, 100 naval vessels and 700 attack submarines.

In our view, therefore, the danger from conventional war is as great as from nuclear war. The fact is that 150 conventional wars have occurred, while no nuclear war has yet broken out. The dreadful example of the Chernobyl accident, however, reinforces our conviction that nuclear war is both unwinnable and totally destructive.

The nuclear Powers are soberly aware of the nuclear danger and, hence, they are negotiating on how to control and limit the danger of nuclear war. In this context, we regret that the two super-Powers were not able to come to an agreement at Reykjavik. Our regret is tempered by the sober realization that arms control will now have to proceed in a cooler atmosphere. We urge both sides to continue their negotiations. We hope that there will not be an arms race of a new kind, which would suck in resources at a time when the world cannot afford it.

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

We are not saying that nations do not need weapons for self-defence. We are not so naïve as to believe that all men are righteous. We have heard of groups of mercenaries trying to hijack power in small States. We think that small nations should have the right to protect themselves against those pirates and mercenaries, against covetous small imperialists and latter-day neo-colonialists.

The example of Switzerland comes to mind. It is a small, well armed nation which trusts its own citizens to the extent of allowing them to keep at their homes their rifles and ammunition. Yet it is a nation which has prospered in peace for centuries. This is an interesting example of a well-armed nation which has yet managed to live in peace with its neighbours, thus proving that it is the intention behind the arms that is most important. Other wise nations have renounced militarism altogether and their economic success is testimony to their wisdom.

At the same time, we are aware that what is considered adequate armaments for a small nation would not be adequate for a great Power leading an alliance which it is committed to protect. We agree that it is hard to draw a line between what is adequate and what is over-armament, but we believe that the inexorable iron law of economics will dictate the limits. There are of course examples of nations which have preferred to sacrifice their peoples' standard of living in order to pursue their imperialistic ambitions. We have one well-known case in South-East Asia. But in general no nation is so rich that it can afford these expensive modern weapons by the thousands and at the same time cater to the expanding needs and demands of its citizens.

We are pragmatic in recognizing that the problems of arms control and disarmament will last for decades; and we understand that because these problems relate to national security they will last as long as men do not change. As Saint Augustine said: "Lord, make me chaste, but not just yet." Men have faced

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

these problems for centuries. In its time the cross-bow was considered too powerful and un-Christian, and there were efforts to ban it.

Small States faced with perennial problems of ensuring security in dangerous regions may opt for the same solutions as the ancient Greek city-States did when faced with the might of Sparta or the threat of invasion from the Persian kings: they formed alliances and tried diplomacy to settle the problems. Similarly, the ancient Chinese States formed the vertical alliance when faced with the expanding Chinese State called Chin, which was the first to unify China. The State of Chin, in turn, formed its client States into the horizontal alliance. Modern equivalents are the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliances. Such alliances bring with them incipient dangers of automatic linkage, whereby the tail wags the dog and small allies drag the others into a bigger war. Such alliances also bring the usual problems of alliance management: who is to do what for whom.

The answers to all those problems are very clear; they are within our grasp, but the political will is lacking. As one of the Tang dynasty Zen masters has said: "Searching for the truth is like riding a buffalo to look for a buffalo." To trust and love our fellow men, whether as individuals, families, tribes or nations, that is the ultimate answer to arms control and disarmament. That has been the answer since the time that Cain slew Abel. But that is the idealistic answer.

Perhaps a more practical answer is shown by the example of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) of which Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand are members. It is instructive to compare the "before" and "after" pictures. Before ASEAN was created our region suffered from violent conflicts, border wars and territorial claims; each nation, ignorant of the other, oriented towards the former colonial Power; trade, communications, tourism

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

and other people-to-people ties were at a minimum. Now we can sincerely say that, because of ASEAN, there is more peace, more stability and more interaction in all forms between the member States. One interesting point to note is that we have in ASEAN's charter provision for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The founding fathers of ASEAN were also wise in realizing the need to move slowly, at a pace comfortable for the slowest, to concentrate on the more achievable sectors, to be aware of sensitivities, to involve not only the Governments but also the peoples, the media, the academics and the private sectors.

Frequently, ASEAN is compared to the European Community, but we should note one vital difference: the member States of that Community have been nation-States for centuries, while the ASEAN member States have achieved independence only since the Second World War. Also, our goals are different, our pace, systems and institutions are different. But what we have similarly achieved is regional peace and stability. The example of ASEAN is matched by regional associations in the Caribbean, Latin America, South Asia and Africa. In a turbulent world, these regional associations have created oases of peace and fostered habits of peaceful co-operation.

My argument can be summed up in a phrase: regionalism is a positive form of confidence building. The following is stated in the United Nations "Study on conventional disarmament":

Although confidence-building measures, whether military or non-military, cannot serve as a substitute for concrete disarmament measures, they can play an important role in progress towards disarmament in that they can encourage a climate of trust and international co-operation, whether they are taken unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally. By assisting in the development of an improved climate of international relations, they can help to create conditions conducive to the adoption of measures of limitation of conventional arms and armed forces and disarmament." (A/19/348, para. 107)

(Mr. Hong, Singapore)

This view reinforces our points, which are: first, small States cannot effectively do much about the central nuclear balance that is negotiated between the great Powers; secondly, small States, however, are affected by the conventional arms race and are often the victims and/or proxies of great Powers in conventional wars; thirdly, before getting involved in conventional conflicts, small States should consider the option of regionalism and good-neighbourliness and the peaceful settlement of conflicts: regionalism is a positive form of confidence-building or a form of preventive arms control; fourthly, ASEAN is a good example of a healthy regional association which has contributed much to the maintenance and preservation of peace and stability in South East Asia.

In conclusion, our message to small States faced with overwhelming problems of security and arms control is that it is more productive to build better and closer relations with neighbouring States than to continue buying arms in a futile pursuit of security. At the same time we should arrange our internal affairs so as to provide no excuse for outsiders to interfere. Good government begets peace, which is the goal of disarmament and arms control. The paths to peace are many, and small States can take the low road of confidence-building through co-operative regionalism while the great Powers take the high road of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway): Last year, during the discussions on disarmament questions in this Committee, we sensed a more constructive approach than during preceding sessions of the General Assembly. That development resulted mainly from improvements in the East-West relationship as demonstrated by the summit meeting in Geneva between the leaders of the United States of America and the Soviet Union. It is the hope of my delegation that that trend will continue and be reinforced at this session of the General Assembly and, of course, particularly in this Committee.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

My Government attaches great importance to the agreement that was reached at the Stockholm Conference on a new generation of security and confidence-building measures in Europe. We believe that this outcome is an important contribution to the efforts aimed at enhancing security on the European continent. At the same time it is our hope that such regional measures might be of significance also in a global context. On the multilateral level we welcome the agreement at the recent Review Conference on the biological weapons convention.

The results obtained in some limited fields should not however obscure the fact that the main problems before us are still to be solved. Major breakthroughs still elude us in the most fundamental disarmament issues.

We therefore share the disappointment expressed in this Committee that the meeting last weekend in Reykjavik between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev did not bring about concrete progress in the fields of arms control and disarmament despite the great efforts undertaken. Such progress would have been of great importance to the bilateral nuclear and space talks in Geneva as well as in other forums of arms control and disarmament.

We share the view that the United States and the Soviet Union now face the real challenge to continue their search for new solutions. Agreements of potentially major significance seem to have been in prospect in Reykjavik with regard to strategic and intermediate-range nuclear weapons as well as other aspects of the East-West relationship. This has shown that agreements are possible. On the basis of what was achieved in Reykjavik the super-Powers should, despite the regrettable temporary set-back, continue their efforts to create a safer world for mankind.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

Clearly a special responsibility for international security rests with the nations that have the largest military potentials. Arms control and disarmament must not, however, be seen exclusively as a domain of the militarily most powerful States. Questions of such magnitude concern the entire world community; they concern all of us. It must therefore be the responsibility of all the States in this Committee to develop further the atmosphere we experienced last year, thereby giving a strong manifestation of world opinion on these matters and giving impetus to the international disarmament process.

At this stage allow me to point out that the growing number of draft resolutions in the First Committee constitutes a problem that should be considered by all Member States. We seem to be facing a development in which less and less time can be devoted to examining the issues on the agenda.

There is clearly a need to continue the process of streamlining and rationalizing the procedures and practices of the Committee with a view to making them more effective. An overhaul of the Committee's agenda is necessary, and in this connection a further refinement of the cluster system is in order. In this respect I should like warmly to support the views expressed by my colleague Ambassador Alatas in his statement at the organizational meeting on 8 October and his proposal that the Committee's chairmen of recent years, together with this session's Bureau, should meet to discuss ways and means of making the work of the Committee more efficient. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that I personally would be ready to participate in such an effort whenever you deem it convenient.

The challenge posed by nuclear weapons remains the most fundamental issue before us. It must be a matter of the highest priority to reduce our dependence upon these weapons. In our opinion a high level of nuclear armaments in itself poses a grave danger and gives ample reason to seek reductions.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

A reduction in nuclear arsenals, however, will not in itself necessarily lead to enhanced international security. The nuclear issue should therefore, in our view, not be seen in isolation from other types of weapons. This is reflected in the question of the prevention of nuclear war - to which Norway, together with its allies, attaches the utmost importance. The question of the prevention of nuclear war cannot be considered separately from the question of the prevention of war in general. A nuclear war could, in fact, be triggered by the escalation of a conventional conflict. What is therefore at stake is the prevention of war in all its dimensions in a nuclear age.

At the same time, we support the increased attention devoted to the question of conventional disarmament, also in the multilateral context. Judging from the European experience, significant nuclear disarmament may, in our view, be possible only if adequate attention is given to the role of conventional forces.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, Norway sees a comprehensive test ban as an important arms control measure, which would play a key role in promoting the nuclear disarmament process. It would be a significant contribution to the prevention of further horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons as well.

My Government therefore welcomes the talks begun in 1986 by the United States and the Soviet Union on the entire scope of issues relating to nuclear testing. We hope that those bilateral talks will pave the way for the removal of the obstacles that have long prevented progress in this field. It is our hope that an early result of these talks will be ratification of the threshold test-ban Treaty of 1974 and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes of 1976.

A test ban is not merely an issue between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Conference on Disarmament should in the first instance resume its in-depth examination of unresolved practical issues in this field, such as

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

compliance, verification and scope. It is necessary to reach an understanding on the scope of a test ban. Such a ban should include both nuclear-weapon tests and so-called nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. It should thus, in our view, prohibit all nuclear explosions in all environments for all time, and it should be applicable to all States. At this session of the General Assembly, we should seek to arrive at a recommendation to the Conference on Disarmament, based on as wide a base of support as possible, to start concrete work on this issue at its next session.

It is our view that a global seismological network would play an essential role in the verification of a nuclear test ban. In the past few years, significant progress has been made in this field by the scientific expert group of the Conference on Disarmament. Such a network must be operative by the time a test-ban treaty is in force and should ensure a reliable international data exchange on the basis of the most modern technology available at the time of its establishment. Norway thus welcomes the interest shown by the Soviet Union in 1986 in using the exchange of waveform data as part of a global system of verification of a test ban.

For a number of years, Norway has devoted considerable resources to contributing to the development of a global system. Since its establishment in 1970, the Norwegian Seismic Array (NORSAR) has been one of the world's largest seismological observatories. Last year, a new array was inaugurated. The New Norwegian Regional Seismic Array System (NORESS) incorporates some of the most recent technological and scientific advances in the field of seismic array design. Our experience in this field leads us to the conclusion that a large number of questions related to verification of a nuclear test ban are, indeed, solved.

A global and comprehensive ban on chemical weapons is urgently needed. Significant progress has been achieved during negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. In light of the need to intensify negotiations, my Government welcomes the agreement in the Conference on Disarmament to continue work prior to the opening of the 1987 session of the Conference.

My country, which is the candidate of the Western Group for membership in the Conference on Disarmament, has taken an active part in those negotiations. Since 1982, several working papers have been submitted concerning verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons. Those papers have been based on research results from experiments undertaken under field conditions and should be viewed in light of the agreement to incorporate a prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in the global convention. The Norwegian research programme is aimed at developing proposals for full-fledged procedures for verification of the alleged use of chemical weapons on a year-round basis. Such procedures would facilitate implementation of the global convention.

A basic and as yet unresolved question is that of the modalities for handling requests for on-site inspection on challenge. On 15 July, the United Kingdom introduced in the Conference on Disarmament a new proposal which in our view constitutes a genuine and serious attempt to establish a basis for an acceptable compromise on that question.

Another unresolved question concerns the development of effective procedures for verifying the non-production of chemical weapons, although substantial progress has been made in 1986 on the concept of listing chemical substances that would be subject to control. Norway favours a solution whereby the chemical industry would be subject to routine inspection on a random basis and whereby relevant statistical data would regularly be exchanged.

My Government views with the greatest concern and seriousness the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war, in violation of the Geneva Protocol of

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

1925. The use of those abhorrent weapons is another reminder of the need to conclude a global convention without further delay.

It is therefore the view of my Government that it must be a matter of the highest priority for us at this General Assembly to give the Conference on Disarmament unambiguous support in its negotiations on a global ban. All resources should now be utilized to finalize a draft convention in 1987. Intermediate measures can in no way reduce the need for a comprehensive global ban.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

The adoption of a final declaration at the second Review Conference of the States parties to the biological weapons Convention represented a positive step towards strengthening the prohibition of biological and toxin weapons. My Government attaches particular importance to the supporting strengthening measures on which the Conference agreed in order to prevent or reduce the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions and in order to improve international co-operation in the field of peaceful biological activities. The holding of an ad hoc meeting of scientific and technical experts in March and April next year to finalize the modalities for the exchange of information and data represents an innovation in connection with the implementation of the Convention.

The Conference on Disarmament managed in 1985 to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space. By examining and identifying issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the Conference has done useful and necessary initial work. The deliberations have proved the vital importance of all States parties complying with the outer space Treaty and other treaties relevant to outer space. Apart from the multilateral treaties, the 1972 anti-ballistic missile Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States represents a corner-stone of the existing régime. A further evaluation of the existing agreements relevant to outer space is required with a view to agreeing on areas which should be dealt with in greater depth by the Conference on Disarmament. Efforts are indeed needed to prevent the spread of the arms race into outer space, and it is the firm view of my Government that outer space should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. That requires both bilateral and multilateral deliberations.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

It must be a matter of great importance for this Committee to give voice to the concern of world opinion that the militarization of outer space should not take place, and we therefore urge that a determined effort be undertaken this year again to bring about a single draft resolution that can command as wide a support as possible.

In view of the close relationship between disarmament and development, Norway has actively supported the holding of a United Nations Conference devoted to that matter. We all know that such a Conference was scheduled for this year but that it has been postponed until 1987. We earnestly hope that the necessary decisions will be taken at this session of the General Assembly with regard to holding that Conference as soon as possible. Considerable preparations have already been made. A Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development would, in our view, represent a first occasion for United Nations Member States to address that relationship in a comprehensive manner. The International Conference would thus be the beginning of an in-depth consideration of that issue within the United Nations, and it would also offer an opportunity to formulate guidelines for future activities on the national and international levels in the field of the relationship between disarmament and development.

Let me conclude by repeating what I said at the outset: that we hope that at its forty-first session, the General Assembly will be able to carry out an examination of the crucial issues before it in a spirit of good will and co-operation, thereby creating a solid basis for future work in the Conference on Disarmament and in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. At the same time, a constructive outcome of our deliberations would send a powerful signal to other negotiating forums at this vital stage in the disarmament process.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): When during the election of the Committee officers my delegation proposed the candidacy of Japan for the post of Vice-Chairman, I had the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. I shall therefore not repeat my congratulations. However, I wish to say how pleased my delegation is at the outstanding way in which you have guided the work of the First Committee since the beginning of the session, in an unfavourable international climate characterized by deep distrust.

The hopes aroused by last year's meeting between the leaders of the two great Powers, held in November 1985 at Geneva, and by the recent follow-up meeting, held on 10 and 11 October 1986 at Reykjavik, were frustrated by the total absence of any political will on the part of the two great nuclear Powers to reach agreements on even partial or gradual nuclear disarmament. My delegation continues to believe that the two great Powers will be able to overcome their difficulties and resume constructive dialogue leading to the elimination of the military nuclear arsenal, thus creating a climate of trust, dialogue and détente.

The present psychological environment should in no way demoralize the members of the First Committee or, still less, those of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, for the international community will eventually bring increased moral pressure to bear on the two great nuclear Powers to meet again and jointly seek ways to reach a nuclear disarmament agreement.

The objectives of this Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament are to eliminate the threat of war, especially nuclear war, to seek ways of halting nuclear testing and the growing military nuclear capacity, and to reverse the nuclear arms race with a view to achieving lasting peace.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

All the nuclear Powers have recognized the negative nature of nuclear deterrence, especially because since 1945 - when the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were destroyed by the first atomic bombs - no nuclear war has taken place. Strategic nuclear superiority and attempts to limit damage in the event of nuclear war would thus appear to be incompatible from the military point of view, for strategic nuclear superiority guarantees deterrence while attempts to limit damage in the event of nuclear war would seem to be futile, the destruction of civilian targets being inevitable in the event of nuclear bombardment.

The theory whereby the role of nuclear weapons is essentially limited to deterrence has been rendered invalid by gradual escalation. The creation of various nuclear-weapon systems - strategic weapons with a 6,400-kilometre range, intermediate-range weapons with a range between 2,400 and 6,400 kilometres, short and medium-range weapons with a range between 800 and 2,800 kilometres, and tactical weapons - cannot guarantee the safety of the areas over which those nuclear weapons pass or that of areas near the target.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

The unfortunate nuclear accident that recently occurred at the nuclear installation at Chernobyl in the USSR was eloquent testimony to the fact that scientists conceive and produce nuclear weapons in an orderly and conscientious way, whereas control over the effects of such nuclear weapons on human beings as well as on the environment is still beyond the power of human intelligence. Hence the incalculable destructive consequences of the explosion of any so-called nuclear weapon, whatever its range.

The international community is constantly aware that 50 per cent of the 50,000 nuclear missiles now in the possession of all the world's nuclear Powers, which represent a potential nuclear explosive power of a million of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima, might have been destroyed had an agreement been reached at Reykjavik. The same would have been true of the arsenals of conventional weapons of the nuclear Powers, that is, more than 140,000 combat tanks, more than 35,000 combat aircraft, more than 21,000 helicopters, more than 1,100 large naval warships and more than 700 nuclear-attack submarines.

Finally, the nuclear-arms race represents the desire on the part of certain nuclear Powers to impose upon the planet a new strategic world order, whose prime objective would be to ensure an unparalleled military superiority and an uncontested hegemony over the entire globe.

The nuclear rivalry that has resulted makes the antagonists yearn for a military and technological superiority and thus prevents them from considering the critical economic situation in Africa, the world debt problem standing in the way of development in the third world - in short, the poverty, famine and squalor that afflict a large number of third world countries.

It is striking to note that the total amount of the expenditures on nuclear armaments equals the total indebtedness of all the third world countries. From a strictly economic point of view, the economic growth of the third world countries

and their increased participation in world trade, as advocated in the Fourth Part of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), could act as a stimulant to the economies of all Member States. It would lead to more intensive trade, to stronger economic, industrial and technological relations and to a close co-operation in various spheres between the third world and the industrialized and nuclear Powers.

That statement has been borne out by the prosperity achieved by the countries members of the Atlantic Alliance in the aftermath of the Second World War following implementation of the Marshall Plan, a prosperity that benefited both the Western countries and the rest of the world as well. In 1947, George Marshall stated:

"Our policy is not directed against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, despair and chaos."

If the international community of 1945 could harbour such a concept of goodwill and humanity, dear to the philosopher Kant, is it inconceivable that 40 years later that same international community might give priority attention to the development concerns of some countries over and above the concerns of individual hegemony?

This approach was called for repeatedly by the Chairman of the Group of 77 when introducing in the General Assembly the item on the problem of third world indebtedness. In 1950, the Indian delegation submitted a proposal for a United Nations peace fund aimed at developing the under-developed regions by drawing on funds to be built up from the savings realized through arms reduction. That proposal was followed in 1985 by the initiative of the delegation of Sri Lanka, calling upon the United States of America and the Soviet Union to reduce their military expenditures by 10 per cent in order to alleviate the international indebtedness of the poorest nations.

In this connection my delegation hopes that the First Committee will be able to take a decision on the convening in 1987 of an International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and to set a site for that

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

Conference. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/155, it was to have been held last July at Paris, but, because of pressing circumstances, the French Government, which had in June acted as host to the International Conference on the Adoption of Sanctions against Racist South Africa, was unable to accommodate it.

Given the disarmament desires expressed by many delegations of States Members, my delegation is certain that a candidate will come forward to act as host to that Conference, preparations for which are well advanced in the Preparatory Committee.

General and complete disarmament can be realized only with effective international controls. Therefore, all nuclear Powers, including South Africa, must submit to the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The same obligation should extend to all peaceful nuclear facilities to ensure the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In that connection my delegation supports the strict application of the decision taken in 1964 by the Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at Cairo declaring Africa a nuclear-free-zone. The Tlatelolco Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America is already in effect in implementation of that earlier Treaty.

The progress achieved by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament on chemical weapons means that the First Committee should give serious attention to that subject in order to achieve a prompt agreement. My delegation wishes to pay a special tribute to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, His Excellency Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom, for the hard work he has done throughout his term as Chairman to complete negotiations on chemical weapons and for the positive contribution he made to the drafting of a multilateral convention on a total and effective prohibition of the development, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. I hope that his

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

successor, His Excellency Ambassador Ekeus of Sweden, will be able with equal dedication to work towards the completion of the drafting of the convention.

Within the Conference on Disarmament, the other items on its agenda continue to form the subject of consideration by Conference members. We must note, however, that little progress has been made on questions such as the nuclear-test ban, cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Group of 21, supported by other Groups, no consensus has emerged on the establishment of a subsidiary body on agenda item 1, "Nuclear-test ban". The efforts of some countries, and even those of the Chairman, to draw up a mandate for the ad hoc committee to be established under agenda item 1 did not evoke a favourable response from the other members of the Conference.

My delegation hopes that those consultations will continue so that those first two items on the agenda of the Conference can be given thorough consideration by subsidiary bodies, as is the case with regard to certain other items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

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In this regard, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, Mr. Garcia Robles, for the enrichment of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament which certainly is a time-consuming task the substance of which requires more active participation from Conference members.

There is also a need to broaden the Conference's membership. My delegation has noted the agreement reached by the Conference to appoint two new members, one representing the socialist Group and the other the Western Group, but consultation continues with regard to the other two members to represent the Group of 21.

My delegation cannot remain insensitive to the concern voiced by numerous delegations at the Conference on Disarmament in the sphere of the prevention of an arms race in space. Space, being the common heritage of mankind, should accordingly be reserved for exclusively peaceful purposes so as to promote the scientific, economic and social development of all nations.

The danger of seeing the research and development programmes of the two leading space Powers and the energy of their military rivalry extend into space has become real since the emergence of the "star wars" age. This new spiral in which the two leading nuclear Powers are engaged may lead them to the development, testing, manufacture and, possibly, even the deployment of weapons systems and their elements which may be used in, extend to or from space and could touch off a new, irreversible competition in the sphere of space arsenals.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of the Nuclear Arms Race in Outer Space should press on unrelentingly with its work so as to induce the nuclear Powers concerned to halt this race.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

In conclusion, the delegation of Zaire wishes to congratulate Mr. Martenson, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, and Mr. Kheradi, Secretary of the Committee, and his entire team for their positive contribution to the preparation of disarmament conferences and the dissemination of publications on disarmament. We are sure that this team will spare no effort to prepare meticulously for the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Mr. ROCHE (Canada): Last weekend the United States and the Soviet Union brought a historic disarmament agreement tantalizingly close to achievement. Since then both super-Powers have informed the world that they will persist in this effort and build on the progress achieved at Reykjavik. The negotiators have already resumed their meetings in Geneva.

Those are highly significant developments that have produced a renewed atmosphere of hope as this Committee begins its deliberations. For, as Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told the Canadian Parliament this week, the elements are now in place for an ongoing civilized dialogue in Geneva which, it is hoped, will result in General Secretary Gorbachev's coming to the United States as agreed upon. The Canadian Prime Minister added:

"There are stumbling-blocks on both sides. That is what negotiations are all about - sitting down with open minds, knowing the objections on both sides, and trying to effect an honourable compromise."

The Canadian Government hopes that people of goodwill will achieve a substantive accord which could be signed at an early summit. Arms control, however, is a fragile process; its environment must be protected. It is therefore doubly important to resist all actions which might be seen as weakening or unravelling the existing international framework on which East-West relations and arms control are built. Compliance with existing agreements is essential.

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

It is of course a reality of our time that the United States and the Soviet Union will determine the major aspects of any international framework for global security. But security is everyone's business. All of us have a stake in international security, and all of us have a responsibility to play a constructive role in the arms-control process.

Canada will press on with constructive work in every multilateral forum that one day must achieve the basis for a world community freed from the weapons of mass destruction. Iceland showed that the complete elimination of ballistic missiles in 10 years is now seriously discussed at the highest levels. The full implementation of this historic opportunity is our task. Iceland was a moment on the journey, but the journey goes on.

When President Reagan addressed the General Assembly before the Reykjavik meeting he spoke of hope, of a future without weapons of mass destruction. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to peace, to a more stable super-Power relationship, and to substantial progress on arms control and disarmament. The President expressed his Government's willingness to ratify the threshold test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on Peaceful Nuclear Explosions, once agreement was reached on improved verification procedures. He offered to consider other limits on nuclear testing in parallel with arms reductions. It is our hope that the Soviet Union will find it possible to build on this realistic and welcome approach as a firm foundation for real progress.

When Foreign Minister Shevardnadze came to New York earlier in this session he, too, gave us reason for optimism. He spoke of relations with the United States as holding promise - of encouraging outlines of meaningful agreements between his country and the United States. And when we later welcomed him in Ottawa, Mr. Shevardnadze again repeated his country's commitment to more stable East-West ties and to progress on arms control.

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But in this atmosphere of expectation two notes of caution are in order. First, any sense of new momentum can lead to lasting, effective results, only if it is backed up by patience, quiet negotiation and due attention to adequate verification, which over the long term will assure confidence in compliance. Secondly, our hopes and expectations surrounding the super-Power talks and the bilateral nuclear and space negotiations in Geneva, as important as they are, should not be allowed to distract attention from the necessity for complementary progress in conventional and multilateral arms-control forums.

It is in this context that we are all much encouraged by the successful conclusion of the Stockholm Conference. The results of Stockholm bring new openness and predictability to the conduct of military affairs in Europe. The establishment of agreed procedures for air and ground on-site inspections is a landmark achievement - one which will provide an effective basis for other arms-control negotiations.

More broadly, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has had a relatively productive session. The guidelines for confidence-building measures, on which the Commission will report to the General Assembly, like the Stockholm document, should provide a useful basis for future negotiators. They could be drawn on to ensure those elements of confidence, compliance and verification which will be essential components of all effective arms-control agreements.

(Mr. Roche, Canada)

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has also had a more productive session. If it has still not achieved agreement on a global chemical weapons ban, detailed negotiations are intensifying and there have been welcome signs that the Soviet Union is prepared to move forward on verification. We have particularly noted the proposal of the United Kingdom on challenge inspection, which we hope will provide a basis for practical progress on one of the most difficult issues associated with the chemical weapons ban.

This sense of positive accomplishment, however, does not extend to other issues on the Conference of Disarmament's agenda. We are frankly disappointed that progress on a comprehensive nuclear test ban has been so slow. We were particularly discouraged at the failure to agree on a practical mandate for a subsidiary body to work constructively towards an agreed test ban. We note and welcome the fact that the Soviet Union has taken a more forthcoming approach on technical matters relating to the establishment of a global seismic monitoring network. The Australian proposal for an international seismic network is both consistent with Canada's concern for a reliably verifiable test ban and an encouraging step towards the objective of a comprehensive test ban. Expert-level talks between Soviet and United States scientists on nuclear testing are a welcome development which all of us hope can provide yet another step towards our common goal.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a high priority for Canada. It was thus disappointing that the mandate for the subsidiary body on outer space was agreed so late in the session of the Conference on Disarmament. Once the mandate was agreed, discussion was both sober and thoughtful. The existing mandate is clearly demonstrating its usefulness.

Canada played an active part in the Second Review Conference of the biological and toxin weapons Convention. We are heartened by that Conference's final

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declaration, its strong reaffirmation of the principles of the Convention and its restatement of the common interest all share in strengthening the Convention's authority and effectiveness through promoting confidence and co-operation.

Now, this activity shows that the world community is not indifferent or impotent in building a safer world. There is still much to do in the international arena, and Canada pledges once again to do everything in our power to strengthen the international machinery of peace. This world-wide activity must reinforce the efforts of the super-Powers to find their bilateral agreements. For we know that, although 86 per cent of the people of the world do not live in the United States or the Soviet Union, we are all caught up in the fall-out from that relationship of the two great super-Powers, which together possess 95 per cent of the more than 50,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Their relationship, as is obvious, affects everyone. It is in the interests of everyone to help improve the entire East-West relationship and, as Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar said in his acceptance speech last Friday, to

"demand of the Governments of States which possess nuclear weapons ... that they reflect upon their responsibility to their peoples and to the planet itself and pursue policies that will lead to the elimination of these weapons". (A/41/PV.33, p. 12)

It used to be said that history would be the judge of one's actions, but in terms of what we are discussing here there will be no history to write, in a non-future for human life, if the means to destroy the human race, now in the possession of the two super-Powers, should ever be unleashed.

Consequently, the role of the United Nations in disarmament is to construct a viable framework of multilateral progress so as to enhance the prospect of major bilateral agreements. More attention should be paid in this Committee to consensus

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resolutions with as much substance as possible, rather than merely increasing the number of resolutions. At the 1976 session, 10 years ago, there were 23 resolutions, 8 of which were adopted by consensus. In 1985, there were 66 resolutions, 20 of which were adopted by consensus. The growth of non-consensus resolutions, many of which cancel one another out and split apart the Committee, is a dubious achievement and a complete puzzlement to the outside world. Let us not forget that the Final Document of the first special session, which remains the yardstick by which we measure progress, was a consensus agreement. Important advice has been offered by last year's Chairman, Ambassador Alatas of Indonesia, to form a small working group to attempt rationalization of the Committee's work.

What is needed to reinvigorate the concept of collective security, including arms control, is not a new structure or a set of principles, for we have a perfectly adequate framework for peace already in place in the form of the United Nations and its Charter. What needs to be done is to use it effectively.

It is a source of pride to Canada that one of last year's resolutions that was adopted by consensus was a substantive Canadian resolution, "Verification in all its aspects", which highlights the importance of verification as a key element in the arms control negotiating process. Underlying every arms control issue is the question of confidence - of assurance of compliance, and thus of verification. We in Canada are certain that verification cannot be left aside as a subsidiary element of arms control. On the contrary, though the concept of verification must never be seen as an obstacle to be thrown up against serious arms control negotiation, it must be an integral and essential part of all arms control agreements.

Canada intends to take the lead again this year in putting forward a similar draft resolution. Our aim will be to reaffirm the importance of effective arrangements for verification, arrangements based on sound technical competence and

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principles which can be carefully tailored to fit specific agreements. Canada wants the General Assembly to have the Disarmament Commission consider verification at the earliest possible opportunity. We hope that, as last year, all Member States will join in supporting this important undertaking.

A year ago the Canadian Government developed a programme of action for the remaining half of the Second Disarmament Decade. This programme continues to focus on practical solutions to arms control problems, on laying the essential groundwork for the creation of confidence and trust vital to arms control agreements.

As part of this programme of action the Canadian Government continues to provide some 1 million Canadian dollars to the Verification Research Unit in our Department of External Affairs. That unit has continued its work on key issues relating to a limitation of nuclear testing leading to a comprehensive test ban, a global chemical weapons convention and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. To assist in laying the foundations for a comprehensive test ban, the Canadian Government is upgrading its seismic array in our own Northern Territory. Just last week we hosted a successful technical workshop in Ottawa at which 16 countries, including the United States and the Soviet Union, were represented. Our commitment to the International Seismic Data Exchange remains firm. Verification has now become an international concern, and Canada welcomes the statement issued by the six nations of the five-continent peace initiative at their recent summit meeting in Mexico that they seek co-operation with non-nuclear States in international verification arrangements related to future nuclear disarmament. We in Canada are certain that, in putting our efforts into a programme of action which concentrates on practical solutions and co-operating with other nations, we are on the right track.

Canada's commitment to verifiable and balanced arms control and disarmament remains absolutely firm. The Canadian Prime Minister himself has recently again

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set out the six policy areas of our Government: negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability; maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation régime; support for a comprehensive test ban treaty as a fundamental and abiding objective of Canadian foreign policy; negotiation of a chemical weapons ban; prevention of an arms race in outer space; and confidence-building measures to facilitate the reduction of military forces in Europe and elsewhere.

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Again, at this United Nations session - and in the Conference on Disarmament - Canada will be looking for early progress in these areas of crucial concern to us all. Among these, the one perhaps closest to realization is a global chemical-weapons ban. This is a vital issue, on which constructive proposals have been made and in regard to which there should be no insurmountable obstacle to early agreement.

We shall continue to participate in the search for effective means of ensuring that outer space be used only for peaceful purposes. Canada actively continues to seek a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as a fundamental arms control objective. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has told the General Assembly - on 24 September - that a nuclear-test ban is an objective towards which concrete steps can and should be taken now. We believe that what is needed for effective results is to begin work immediately, working step by step, without pre-conditions, towards a lasting, mutually acceptable and verifiable comprehensive test ban. Progress towards the limiting and ending of all testing is essential.

High on Canada's list of priorities is the need to strengthen still further the nuclear non-proliferation régime, to guard against the spread of nuclear weapons technology, and to limit in every way possible the possibility of accidental nuclear weapons disaster. Encouraged as we are by the reaffirmation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the 1985 Review Conference, we are also conscious of the need for nuclear-weapon States to implement article VI on the cessation of the arms race.

In the long and complex struggle for peace, two issues stand out above all others - disarmament and development. While it is true that those two great goals require a peaceful atmosphere for their realization, progress must be made in each area to establish the conditions for peace. That is why the forthcoming United Nations International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and

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Development is so important. The participating nations in the preparatory process have already agreed that disarmament and development, which are in themselves distinct processes, should be vigorously pursued because they both strengthen peace and security and promote prosperity. An international panel of eminent personalities has advised the Conference that current levels and trends in global military expenditures "stand in sombre contrast to the state of the world economy". Canada is heartened by the substantive progress made at the third preparatory meeting last June and believes the main conference should be held in July 1987 in New York.

On my travels across Canada this year, I found a high level of interest in and concern for disarmament. I also met an unprecedented response to the declaration of the International Year of Peace. Canada's International Year of Peace programme has been substantive. Two weeks ago, as happened all around the world, we marked the International Day of Peace: bells rang in communities from coast to coast in Canada in an eloquent peal for peace. And people gathered under the bells of the Peace Tower in Ottawa to mark the International Day of Peace.

A commemorative postage stamp and a fine gold mint coin were issued as part of the Government's International Year of Peace programme, to commemorate what should be a milestone in man's search for peace and security. Two days later, under the same Peace Tower, I accepted the peace torch from athletes participating in the first Earth Run, which is sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). And, in a moving symbolic act, I handed it on, much in the way that what we have done this year will be handed on in the future. The International Year of Peace will thus be an inspiration to people and Governments everywhere to make their own contribution to peace.

I have spoken of new hope and commitment. I have referred to a new sense of expectation surrounding the super-Power relationship - an expectation merely

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heightened by the meeting at Reykjavik. If, as we earnestly desire, that leads to substantive agreement on crucial nuclear questions, we must see the success as a spur to greater effort and concrete results on multilateral arms-control issues. And even if agreement on nuclear weapons reductions continues to elude the super-Powers, it will then be all the more important to press on. Wherever and whenever we can - in the United Nations First Committee, in the Conference on Disarmament, in the Disarmament Commission - we must redouble our efforts towards agreement on those important arms control issues where all of us can realistically expect to play an immediate and direct role.

The portents are more encouraging now than they have been for many years. Results will not come without effort, and the stakes are high. But the task - the reward for success and the penalty for failure - is everyone's. Canada, for one, will continue to work in every way possible towards our common goal of a world of confidence, security, trust and peace.

Mr. BOUZIRI (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, first let me take this opportunity of saying how happy my delegation is to see you guiding over our work. Your eminent personal qualities, well known to us all, your dedication to the cause of disarmament and your command of international security matters will guarantee that this year our work will meet the expectations of all. I am sure that the competence of the other officers, whom I am pleased to congratulate here, will not fail to provide you the assistance you need in carrying out your important task.

In this International Year of Peace, which the international community is celebrating with such ardent hope, our deliberations on questions of disarmament and international security are taking place in an atmosphere of both anxiety and hope.

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There is anxiety, because we continue to witness an international situation still haunted by the existence of focal points of tension endangering international peace and security. The persistence of these conflicts and their inherent risk of geographical expansion emphasize the urgency and the need for political will to find peaceful solutions.

The developing countries, which are the stage for tragic armed conflicts in the world today, have for their part become the area of deployment and testing for increasingly sophisticated and lethal weapons, which daily cause thousands of deaths and injuries. Arms supply contracts, which continue to increase and thus benefit the military-industrial complexes of the military Powers, cannot fail to condemn the developing countries to costly expenditures, thus hampering their own economic and social development.

There is anxiety, furthermore, because the unbridled arms race, the dangers of which Tunisia has often brought to the attention of the international community, continues unabated. Military expenditures by the major Powers are now stated in terms of billions of dollars, thus wasting vast resources in men, money and scientific know-how which our world so badly needs, particularly in the crisis we are now experiencing.

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Hunger, poverty and underdevelopment thus persist, while astronomical sums are daily spent in a sphere that can bring us only death and desolation. We cannot allow this inertia to continue; the increasing interdependence of today's international relations should make us all to think about ways of putting an end to this absurd contradiction. The development nations must understand that their economic development in the medium or long term depends on that of the developing countries and that the gap separating the North from the South cannot but have harmful consequences for their own economies.

The gradual reallocation to economic and social development of the massive resources now spent in the military sector would reduce the danger to our planet and ensure the well-being and prosperity of all the peoples of the world, including those of the developing countries. That would be to the benefit of all, including the developed countries, which could then devote all their resources to economic and social development in their own countries, while having reduced the risk of war and conflagration.

This is a noble goal, a challenge that we must all take up, for our collective interest is involved. We hope therefore that this year there will be the necessary political will to ensure the convening in 1987 of the United Nations Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which was to have been held last summer. We fervently hope that participation in that important Conference will be as broad as possible so that we can unite our efforts and achieve the results the international community hopes for and expects.

That is not the only area where a common effort is required. We cannot fail to note the alarming proliferation of nuclear weapons that is taking place in the Middle East and in Africa without any firm action being taken. Numerous and consistent reports appear every day about the ever more obvious risk faced by

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African and Arab States as a result of the continuing close collaboration between Israel and South Africa in the nuclear field and their acquisition of nuclear weapons, thus nullifying the efforts of Arab and African countries to make the two areas nuclear-weapon-free zones. Can we turn our Mediterranean Sea into a lake of peace and stability when Israel has become the world's sixth atomic Power and possesses an impressive range of nuclear weapons, including neutron and hydrogen bombs?

My delegation does not intend this year to review the various items on our agenda, as we have done at previous sessions. On the one hand our position has been set out and elucidated on several occasions in the Committee, and on the other many earlier speakers, have clearly described the dangers inherent in the present international situation, considered in detail the various phases of the arms race over a period of years, and voiced their grave concerns, which are shared by my delegation. I wish, however, to dwell briefly on a few aspects of the world scene over the past year that give cause for a revival of hope and trust.

Last autumn's summit meeting between the leaders of the two super-Powers was the starting point for a new series of contacts between those two countries. Dialogue has been re-established and proposals and counter-proposals have been put forward; and on the basis of the content and scale of those initiatives we believe we can discern a genuine determination to engage resolutely in a serious negotiating process which could lead, given the necessary political will, to substantial arms reduction or disarmament agreements.

Although no specific results have been achieved, the contacts have not been broken off. The Geneva negotiations continue tirelessly; meetings among experts continue; and, setting aside certain mutual accusations regarding form, both sides continue to reaffirm their readiness to reach agreements given a similar readiness on the other side.

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In that context of the relations between the two great Powers, and East-West relations in general, the encouraging results of the Stockholm Conference a month ago should be seen in the light of the positive atmosphere that has characterized the relations between the two blocs for over a year now.

There is thus good reason for the common assessment of the final document adopted by the participants in the Stockholm Conference as historic. For our part we hope it will have beneficial effects both on relations between the two military pacts involved and on international relations in general.

Last weekend's summit meeting between the Soviet and United States leaders monopolized world attention and gave rise to great hopes. Important proposals were put forward and common ground appears to be emerging, particularly concerning medium-range missiles deployed in Europe and Asia. Although, unfortunately, no agreement was reached, the summit clearly showed that, with a minimum of trust and the political will to negotiate and achieve results, even the thorniest problems can be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. Did not the problem of the deployment of medium-range missiles in Europe less than three years ago trigger the most serious crisis in East-West relations since the Cuban missile crisis?

The most serious concern has been expressed for many years now. The Heads of State of six countries from different regions of the world frequently appealed to the United States and Soviet leaders to spare no effort to relieve the world of the nuclear threat and to conclude agreements to that effect. More recently, the Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries, meeting in Harare last September, addressed letters to each of the two Heads of State asking them to agree on ways and means to begin a genuine nuclear disarmament process to eliminating the danger hanging over mankind.

(Mr. Bouziri, Tunisia)

We are deeply convinced, however, that the United Nations must play a central role in the question of disarmament. The Organization's universality and undoubted influence predispose it inevitably to play a major role, particularly in the present situation of dialogue between the Powers that shoulder a large part of the responsibility with regard to the arms race.

Hence, it is a prerogative, indeed a duty, of our Organization to take the opportunity provided by the possibility of a forthcoming summit, and by areas of agreement that are obviously within our grasp, to make a solemn and urgent appeal, in its turn and while the Assembly is in session, to the two distinguished leaders to ensure that their next meeting is crowned by substantive agreements covering all the areas where agreements are possible.

The Tunisian delegation therefore hopes that the General Assembly will take this opportunity and join its voice and influence to those of the distinguished personalities and all the non-aligned countries that have been constantly appealing to the two major nuclear Powers to be reasonable and meet the expectations of the whole of the international community.

This endeavour deserves all our attention. It could have positive repercussions, particularly if, as we most sincerely hope, it is given the broadest possible support.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to inform the Committee that the names of the following delegations are on the list of speakers for the meeting this afternoon: Denmark, Mongolia, Bhutan and Burkina Faso.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.