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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20TH MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)
(Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. CARASALES (Argentina)
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 39 to 57, 133, 136, 138 and 139 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ALBORMOZ (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish). My delegation wishes to express its pleasure at the election of Mr. Cbeho to the high responsibility of conducting the work of this important Committee and we should like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee, including the Argentine diplomat, Ambassador Julio Carasales.

It is an honour for all of Latin America and for this Committee, because of its universality and importance in the United Nations, that the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to an eminent Mexican a member of, and our indefatigable guide in this Committee, Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles, whom I congratulate, as I do that other standard-bearer in the cause of disarmament, Mrs. Alva Myrdal.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

The present session of the Committee is not a mere routine exercise on the elusive, increasingly urgent subject of disarmament. It is being held during a year when the voice of the peoples of the world has been raised in all continents and when even the man in the street has been pounding on the door of the United Nations, calling on it to adopt disarmament as the only alternative worthy of the conscience and the mental soundness of mankind.

International tension has become particularly acute this year, and inflation or recession, facets of the crisis of the chaotic world economy, have pitilessly plagued the poor peoples of the world as have the astronomical military expenditures. In this same year there are not only 10 situations of open warfare but many conditions of international tension that lend themselves to armed conflict. Therefore, to raise the problem of disarmament firmly is to defend human dignity, the survival of the species and the very reason for the existence of this world Organization dedicated to peace.

Both collective security and disarmament are essential conditions of international coexistence conducive to development, the permanent aim of the United Nations, which means justice as between peoples and individuals in promoting a better quality of life, with the guarantee of peace. That is why the arms race is so absurd and immoral. It prevents development and widens the gap between peoples. It unduly increases the indebtedness of the poor countries and promotes conflict and death in a world which should instead be seeking a different order directed towards understanding and life. That is why Ecuador, which has traditionally been devoted to peace, advocates the peaceful settlement of disputes as the natural way for the United Nations to promote disarmament and thus transfer resources to the constructive purposes of integrated development.

At the very time when we were regretting that the super-Powers' lack of political will was preventing the adoption of a comprehensive programme of disarmament at the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we fortunately managed to adopt by consensus in the Assembly's Committee on Information a set of 42 action-oriented recommendations, including the use of world information for development purposes, with an appeal

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

to the sense of responsibility of the information media urging them to use their great creative power to promote peace, through disarmament, in order ultimately to foster and finance the development process. That would be an answer to the crisis and the anarchy of the disturbing world situation, which has been aggravated by the fact that, as the Foreign Minister of Ecuador said in the general debate in the General Assembly:

"The realization of the noble purposes of the United Nations has, as at no time before, eluded the reach of the peoples, who anxiously contemplate the permanent weakening of the resolutions of this General Assembly and the non-implementation of the decisions of the Security Council." (A/37/PV.20, p. 63)

For all these reasons Ecuador supports resolutions advocating a ban on the use of force in international relations, the strengthening of machinery for the peaceful settlement of disputes and nuclear disarmament as a stage towards general and complete disarmament under international control.

Here we reaffirm the Sucre doctrine that victory by force of arms does not generate rights and the Riobamba Charter of Conduct, signed on 11 September 1980, which advocates

"... a process of subregional and regional disarmament based on the postulates of the Declaration of Ayacucho which constitutes an effective contribution to general and complete disarmament and makes it possible to free resources for economic and social development". (A/C.3/35/4, p. 2)

Ecuador reiterates its unreserved support for measures aimed at real progress towards arms control and disarmament, for the idea of security based on arms is precarious. In addition to being economically ruinous for everyone, except perhaps for the purveyors of the artefacts of death, the arms race is one more instrument of domination used by the big Powers.

Ecuador's foreign policy is based on principles that include rejection of the occupation of territory by force and the need to settle disputes by peaceful means. To that end machinery is needed to give real effectiveness to the relevant articles of the Charter.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

The incredible military expenditure of our times has exceeded the rate of \$1 million a minute and is the primary cause of inflation. The Foreign Minister of Colombia told the General Assembly that the world spent \$1,200 million on arms every day, which is more than is spent in an entire year by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and other constructive development programmes combined.

A hardening of positions, which runs counter to all disarmament efforts, is brought about by the reduction of multilateralism in international co-operation and the pre-eminence of bilateralism, which is more favourable to intervention, protectionism, commercial discrimination and economic aggression. An example is the appropriation of the resources of other countries, as in the depredation of fishing stocks inside the 200-mile limit, in violation of the national legislation of our countries, laid down in a way that is not in the least at variance with international law.

The fact that there are tensions and differences of opinion as regards the sea makes it essential that the sea, like outer space, be maintained as an area of peace from which that other disturbing arms race should be banned, as should arbitrary actions, such as the appropriation of maritime areas for military purposes, as happened during the regrettable events in the South Atlantic. There should also be a ban on the appropriation of segments of the geostationary synchronous orbit for the placing of satellites, with no other claim than that of being the first occupier and without consulting the countries of the Equator over which the satellites pass, in view of the absence of appropriate legislation which we want.

My country studied with keen interest the third report of the Secretary-General on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and military expenditures. It emphasizes primarily the costs and lethal destructive capacities of existing nuclear arsenals, not only for the Powers that possess them but for the defenceless peoples of the world, who want only to live in peace on a planet that belongs to all of us.

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

Emphasis is placed on the fact that the security of the smallest country is as important as that of any major military Power in our interdependent world.

This moral position that the non-nuclear countries have taken becomes particularly valid when we consider the possibility of our planet being destroyed as the result of war, accident or miscalculation. The slow pace of the disarmament negotiations and the lack of progress in them is a dangerous step backwards, as has been stated by others in this debate. My country condemns the nuclear escalation and the escalation in conventional weapons, which have become ever more destructive, as has been made clear in the regrettable conflicts in Lebanon and in Iran and Iraq. Ecuador would earnestly appeal to those countries that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed To Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We would also urge the international community to conclude the convention on chemical weapons.

President Osvaldo Hurtado of Ecuador has said that our country supports all initiatives promoting the disarmament of the Latin American region in order to free the resources so sorely needed by our countries for development. For the greater security of our part of the world, we hope that France will soon ratify Additional Protocol I of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. That is necessary if all parts of our region are to be covered by the denuclearized status of Latin America, which stands as an example being considered by other continents.

Neither nuclear weapons nor non-nuclear weapons will ever bring about understanding among peoples. Only international legislation ranging from the freezing of arsenals to their elimination can do that. What is particularly necessary is negotiation and compromise. They can lead to fraternal coexistence, which must be based on security within disarmament, as set forth in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament.

We might mention an unchallengeable conclusion of the report of the Independent Commission on Security and Disarmament Issues presided over by Olof Palme: that no nation can achieve absolute security through military

(Mr. Albornoz, Ecuador)

superiority, nor can it defend itself effectively against a nuclear attack, which means that its people will always be insecure and thus the need to ban nuclear war takes precedence over ideological or political confrontations.

My delegation wishes to reserve its right to speak in greater detail on specific items on our agenda. We hope that this Committee will make progress through disarmament and security towards full development, which is the only way to bring about international justice in today's world.

Mr. PAVANARIT (Thailand): May I take this opportunity to join previous speakers in extending on behalf of the Thai delegation and on my own behalf sincere congratulations to the Chairman on his election to conduct the work of the First Committee. His outstanding diplomatic skill and experience will be instrumental in guiding our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion.

Our sincere congratulations go also to the two Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur on their election to their respective high offices.

The Thai delegation wishes the Chairman and all the officers of the Committee every success in their undertaking, and I pledge my delegation's full support and co-operation in the performance of their duties.

I also wish to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles of Mexico and Mrs. Alva Myrdal of Sweden, who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last month for their untiring efforts and devotion to the cause of disarmament.

The international situation today is still marked by recurring crises and conflicts which have heightened the sense of insecurity among all States and have led to the accumulation of destructive weapons. The past four years have witnessed a persistent and sustained increase in military expenditures, the production of increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons and a considerable expansion in nuclear arsenals. This development has not only diverted the resources needed for economic and social development but has further exposed the world to the danger of self-annihilation.

(Mr. Pavanarit, Thailand)

Since nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to mankind and to the survival of civilization, there exists an urgent need to halt the massive build-up and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons. Over the years several agreements have been concluded with a view to reducing the risk of nuclear war. However, these agreements have been limited in scope and have not removed the threat of nuclear war. There have also been some initiatives on the part of the super-Powers to curb the nuclear arms race. However, the proposals put forward thus far seem to have been turned down by one side or the other, and a breakthrough in their efforts still remains to be seen.

While neither the total elimination of nuclear weapons nor the reduction of existing stocks of nuclear weapons seem to be within the bounds of possibility, my delegation is of the view that other goals should be pursued. Among these priority should be accorded to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such a treaty would make it difficult if not impossible for the nuclear-weapon States to develop new weapon designs and would place constraints on the improvement of existing nuclear weapons. In this connection my delegation notes with concern that, although the partial test-ban Treaty, to which Thailand is a party, was signed and entered into force nearly two decades ago, its objective of the discontinuance of all test explosions has not been achieved and nuclear-weapon tests have continued unabated against the wish of the overwhelming majority of the Member States of the United Nations. My delegation looks forward to concrete negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament following its decision this year to set up a working group on verification measures as regards the comprehensive test-ban agreement. My delegation hopes that such a step will eventually lead to a treaty which is acceptable to all States, nuclear and non-nuclear alike.

The establishment of zones of peace has become a major objective of several countries in various regions of the world during the past decade. Thailand has always supported meaningful and constructive efforts which could bring about the realization of such an objective. The establishment of such zones, as stated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, can contribute to strengthening the

(Mr. Pavanarit, Thailand)

security of States within such zones and to international peace and security as a whole. Moreover, such efforts could create conditions which are conducive to stability and thus pave the way for national development and regional co-operation in the economic and social fields. In this connection my delegation wishes to note that Thailand and other Member States of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have since 1971 called for the establishment of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South-East Asia. Today Thailand and the other ASEAN countries are still committed to the concept and will continue to work to bring about the early realization of such a zone in South-East Asia.

(Mr. Pavanarit, Thailand)

Similarly, my delegation is of the view that the establishment of a zone of peace in South Asia would bring security and stability to the countries of that region and its peoples. In this regard, my delegation deeply regrets that the Conference on the Indian Ocean was not convened last year and has to be postponed further. Thailand, as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, strongly supports the early convening of the Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and will continue to pursue this goal actively both within the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee and through bilateral means. Notwithstanding a varied and useful exchange of views in the Ad Hoc Committee during its previous sessions regarding the convening of the Conference, there remains a divergence of views on fundamental issues. My delegation, therefore, hopes that this divergence will be narrowed through a spirit of compromise so that the convening of the Conference can be realized in the foreseeable future.

My delegation remains concerned over persistent news reports of increasing evidence of the alleged use of chemical and biological weapons in several areas of the world, inter alia in certain countries flanking the eastern border of Thailand. In view of their potent characteristics and indiscriminate effects on mankind, my delegation is opposed to the development, production, stockpiling and use of these weapons. In this connection, it may be recalled that Thailand supported General Assembly resolution 35/144 C, which, inter alia, established in 1980 a Group of Experts to investigate reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons. In 1982 the Royal Thai Government rendered every assistance and co-operation to the Group of Experts which was sent to Thailand to collect evidence and to verify the use of these weapons in the neighbouring countries. Following the renewal of its mandate last year, the same Group of Experts is currently paying a visit to Thailand to carry out further the aforesaid functions. My delegation hopes that co-operation will be forthcoming from the countries concerned so as to enable the Group of Experts to conduct on-site investigations and to come up with a more definite conclusion. My delegation also urges the Committee on

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Disarmament to continue negotiations with a view to elaborating, as a matter of high priority, a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, and on their destruction. The concluding of such a convention would overcome deficiencies in the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, of 1925, and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, of 1972. However, provisions on verification methods and procedure would have to be included in such a convention.

Disarmament is a vast and complex task which cannot be completed in a short span of time. However, we should not allow too much time to elapse if we do not want to be overtaken by events. All nations of the world will have to contribute to the disarmament process if the arms race is to be halted and reductions of armaments are to be achieved. This session affords all of us another opportunity during this year to forge ahead towards that goal. In this regard, my delegation pledges its full co-operation in ensuring the successful outcome of our deliberations.

Mr. de La GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): Mr. Chairman, it had been my intention to tell the Ambassador of Ghana, our Chairman, that the French delegation wished to express to him our very sincere congratulations and to wish him success in his important duties. We are very pleased to have presiding over the Committee the representative of an African country, from a continent with which France hopes to develop further close and friendly relations and which quite rightly is playing an increasing role in world affairs and in particular at the United Nations. I wished to say also to our Chairman that we had already noted his authority and competence and that we were quite certain that under his guidance our work would be carried out in the most favourable conditions. As you are in the Chair, Sir, my delegation would like to include you in its congratulations and good wishes, and we wish to say that we are pleased to see today presiding over our proceedings the representative of a great country with which France

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

has enjoyed a long tradition of friendship and very many links. I am pleased to add to these congratulations my personal good wishes to a friend of many years' standing.

The representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the delegations of the member countries of the European Community, on 21 October, made a statement explaining their joint approach, which is consequently that of the French delegation. Today we should like to clarify and fill in certain aspects of our individual position.

However, first of all, we should like to convey to Ambassador Garcia Robles our warmest congratulations on the honour conferred upon him. The Nobel Peace Prize is the well-deserved recognition of the eminent standing that our colleague has been awarded by the international community. His service to disarmament and the talent and conviction that he has devoted to this cause deserve our admiration. Let me add that all of us here, members of the disarmament community, feel proud at the idea, possibly erroneous, that some of the glory of the Nobel Prize will reflect on us.

The present session of the First Committee is, we believe, of particular importance. It follows on the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Many expected that that session would result in a more precise and advanced commitment by the international community to the undertaking of disarmament, and that a new and greater impulse would be given to that endeavour.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

These hopes were unfortunately dashed, but the second special session preserved and confirmed what had been achieved by the first: the Final Document, the institutional system which establishes the competence of the international community as a whole in disarmament matters and which organizes the way in which control should be exercised. Furthermore, since a number of proposals before it could not be discussed, the session decided to transmit them for consideration to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Thus, our Committee can be regarded as to a certain extent the heir or perhaps the successor to the second special session. It is up to us, if not to complete what has been left unfinished, at least to make as much progress in this direction as we can.

While it is true that we are, as it were, inheriting the subject-matter of the second special session, the questions which it has bequeathed to us to study, we are also surrounded by the same conditions as far as disarmament itself is concerned; that is, the same international situation prevails, and we know what a burden this was on the work undertaken and the positions and decisions taken. Disarmament cannot be divorced from its political context, that is, the state of international relations. Referring in the conclusion of its report to the direct links between these two phenomena, the Ad Hoc Committee of the special session noted the more and more frequent recourse to actions which have led to the present deterioration in the situation. This situation has not changed: Afghanistan is still occupied by the Soviet army, which is struggling against national resistance; the Middle East has been the theatre of bloody operations and the right to a homeland has still not been granted to the Palestinian people. War continues between Iraq and Iran and military actions are still going on in South-East Asia and Africa. Finally, in Poland, circumstances with which we are familiar have led to the stifling of all claims to freedom.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

Such actions inevitably affect the climate of international relations. The feelings of safety and confidence, which are so necessary for the work of disarmament, are also profoundly affected thereby. Armaments are the result of insecurity much more than insecurity is the result of armaments.

The armaments position in the part of the world where France is located is a serious source of concern. The security of that region, of course, depends on the maintenance of an overall balance based on a combination of nuclear and conventional forces. But this balance is imperfect and possibly precarious; it includes factors which make for disequilibrium and destabilization. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Claude Cheysson, presented to the special session a precise analysis of this situation. The risks involved in this arise from the following factors: nuclear over-armament on the part of the two major Powers, the possibility of strategic instability resulting from progress or, even more, from breakthroughs in technology, and conventional disequilibrium. But the path to increased safety and security at a progressively reduced level appears today to be clearly defined. Negotiations already under way and negotiations proposed should lead to this.

The first measures relate to nuclear arms. The two major Powers, which possess massive quantities of these weapons, are simultaneously carrying out discussions on strategic arms and intermediate-range weapons. Together with the rest of the international community, the French Government welcomes the beginning of these negotiations. We hope that they will lead to very substantial reductions in the levels of armament and will lead to a better, more stable balance at the lowest possible level.

As far as France's participation in negotiations, on the reduction of nuclear weapons is concerned, the French delegation would like to recall the conditions which would make this possible. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of France formulated these in the following words at the special General Assembly session.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

"In such a context, France cannot consider participating directly or indirectly in negotiations that must for the time being remain bilateral ...

"Our means of deterrence have been limited to the absolutely minimum level necessary to prevent anyone from being able to control France, whereas the super-Powers' capabilities are characterized by an excess of superarmament. There is room for reduction of this excess. France cannot fall below the level of credibility without calling into question its security and independence.

"It would certainly be otherwise if three conditions were met: first of all, the reduction of the arsenals of the super-Powers to such levels that the gap between capabilities could be considered to have changed in nature; secondly, the quantitative and qualitative limitation of defensive strategic systems, which might one day neutralize nuclear deterrence; and, thirdly, significant progress in the reduction of imbalances in conventional arms in Europe, and the elimination of the threat of chemical warfare." (A/S-12/PV.9, pp. 61, 62)

Therefore we seem to have a path mapped out which will lead to the progressive reduction of nuclear arsenals and, we hope, to a considerable reduction of the danger inherent in their existence. But these negotiations will be long and complex.

This explains the impatience which has been expressed both here and elsewhere and the idea of preventing any risk of nuclear warfare by declarations containing a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. This idea was the subject of a resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session and it was once again reintroduced with insistence during the second special session. The French delegation last year expressed its objections to this and we should like today to clarify our position further.

Condemnation of the first use of nuclear weapons and the commitment which this claims to impose on others would introduce a relativity into the commitment not to use force, which is an essential provision of the Charter, since in the General Assembly resolution the first use of nuclear weapons is declared to be the gravest crime against humanity. The most serious violation of the Charter, that is, recourse to force, war of aggression and conquest, therefore no longer seems to be the violation of the supreme commitment.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

That same condemnation and that same commitment would be tantamount to guaranteeing a possible aggressor, even if that aggressor had nuclear weapons, against the defensive use of such weapons. Thus, the nuclear-weapon State violating the commitment to the non-use of force would be the beneficiary of the commitment not to use it, while the victim of the aggression would have imposed upon it a fundamental limitation on the exercise of the right to self-defence.

Secondly, what would be the value of the commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons of a State which committed aggression and thus violated the fundamental commitment of the Charter?

Finally, these juridical and moral arguments are complemented by a reason of decisive importance. In the part of the world which we are considering, the nuclear deterrent appears to be essential to stability, security and, in the final analysis, the preservation of peace. Thus we could not without serious risks deprive of its deterrent effect by a commitment not to use it the nuclear element of this overall balance. Deterrence is intended to discourage use, but it cannot exclude use without cancelling itself out.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

Thus, the commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons not only does not comprise any serious guarantee that it will be implemented but in addition jeopardizes a fundamental condition of security in a large part of the world, and the resulting destabilization would have serious and inevitable consequences everywhere.

It is evident that nuclear war must be prevented by other means. For many years now, in fact, we have been able to avoid it, and a stable method of dissuasion, based on maintenance of a progressively reduced level of armaments, remains in the present circumstances, and perhaps for a long time to come, the necessary pre-condition for the prevention of nuclear war and war in general

But quite apart from this strategic requirement, the nuclear Powers and the international community could act in such a way as to ensure that recourse to nuclear war would be practically ruled out of international life. That objective obviously cannot be dissociated from the other objectives which are by nature bound up with it: the prevention of war itself and the maintenance of security.

The first condition is political: respect for the Charter - that is, the non-use of force, non-intervention in domestic affairs, respect for the sovereignty of States and the peaceful settlement of disputes. If these principles were respected, the problem of preventing war, whether nuclear or conventional, would not even arise.

Then, there is the condition relating to disarmament negotiations. If those which are going on in Geneva result in a balanced and appreciable reduction of the arsenals of the two super-Powers and if the appropriate reductions of conventional forces in Europe were decided upon, the feeling of security and trust which would follow on the success of such negotiations would contribute to the prevention of tension and the risk of war.

Finally, there is the condition relating to confidence-building measures. As regards the nuclear risk, these must necessarily focus on the prevention of accidental conflict, communications, exchanges of information and mutual monitoring.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

Finally, the French delegation would like to recall here the great importance that it attaches to the protection of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This is a problem distinct from the prevention of nuclear war or any war between nuclear States. Until nuclear disarmament has been achieved, we believe that only non-nuclear-weapon States are entitled to any guarantees against their use. That, together with access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, is the legitimate counterpart of their renunciation. The French Government has this year redefined its position in regard to its guarantees. In accordance with the declaration made by Mr. Claude Cheysson at the second special session of the General Assembly, France:

"states that it will not use nuclear arms against a State that does not have them and that has pledged not to seek them, except if an act of aggression is carried out in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon State against France or against a State with which France has a security commitment. In thus moving closer to the kind of guarantee already made by others, France hopes to facilitate the drafting of a Security Council resolution on this issue." (A/S-12/PV.9, p. 69)

By taking this position, the French Government hopes to promote the adoption of a joint text.

It goes without saying that the French Government still intends to conclude with States members of denuclearized zones agreements safeguarding them against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It has already entered into a similar commitment towards the countries members of the denuclearized zone set up under the Treaty of Tlatelolco by adhering to Protocol II of that Treaty.

The reduction of forces and conventional arms in Europe to which I have just referred forms the second condition likely to ensure greater security at a progressively reduced level of armaments in that part of the world where those weapons are the most heavily concentrated. The Conference on Security and

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

Co-operation in Europe, which will resume its work in a few days' time in Madrid, must continue to discuss the proposed conference on disarmament in Europe which France has proposed. We hope that it will finally be possible to work out a mandate which, in the framework of a substantial and balanced result in Madrid, will make possible the convening of that conference, the first stage of which would involve militarily significant, binding and verifiable confidence-building measures.

The question of limiting or reducing conventional forces undoubtedly does not arise in regard to the continent of Europe alone. The alarming number of conflicts waged in various parts of the world with conventional weapons proves this only too well. It is up to the countries that are experiencing security problems between themselves to take appropriate measures in regard to the level of armaments through agreements in a regional context. The same is true of the transfer of weapons. The Disarmament Commission at its last session finally adopted guidelines for undertaking a study of conventional disarmament. We are very gratified at this result, for it was important that this fundamental question be thoroughly examined in its turn by experts under the authority of the Secretary-General. The decision taken by the Commission is consistent with the comprehensive approach to disarmament established by the Final Document of 1978.

After examining the regional aspects of disarmament, I should like to consider the state of discussions and negotiations aimed at multilateral disarmament. The Committee on Disarmament, which is charged with that work, has this year, despite the brevity of its session, given proof of intense activity devoted for the most part to fundamental questions. I will only recall three of those at this time: chemical weapons, the halting of nuclear tests and the prevention of the arms race in outer space.

Efforts have largely been concentrated on the question of chemical weapons, a fundamental issue on our agenda in the Committee on Disarmament. Finally given a mandate authorizing it to negotiate, and using new methods, the

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

relevant group carried out intensive work in a very short period of time and was able to achieve appreciable results: an in-depth examination of various elements of a convention, identification of points on which a consensus seems to be in sight and elaboration of working hypotheses which could serve as a basis for the implementation of solutions to outstanding problems. The question of international verification undoubtedly remains the most difficult issue. That is why the French Government noted with great interest the statements made on that subject by Mr. Gromyko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, at the second special session of the General Assembly. The proposals contained therein were presented to the Committee on Disarmament; examination of these proposals will continue next year and we sincerely hope that they will make a very important contribution to the progress of negotiations.

The Committee on Disarmament decided during its last session to create a working group to consider the problems of verification which the nuclear test-ban treaty would pose. The French Government fully recognizes the desirability of defining a verification system both effective and non-discriminatory. But we believe that the halting of tests should be part and parcel of an effective process of nuclear disarmament, which is in fact a point made in paragraph 51 of the Final Document.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

Thus, any possible undertakings by France with regard to tests must be linked to those which it would find acceptable in the case of limiting its nuclear forces. We have previously stated the conditions in which France could associate itself with the process of nuclear arms reduction. Those conditions have not yet been met. This is why the French delegation in Geneva was not in a position to participate in the work on drafting a treaty to which our Government could not subscribe.

For the first time since it was set up the Committee has included a new item on its agenda, the question of outer space. The French Government attaches major importance to the discussions and negotiations which are at present in progress on this aspect of disarmament. There are considerable risks of destabilization inherent in the military use of outer space. It is particularly important to ensure the protection of satellites which, generally speaking, constitute a stabilizing factor. We hope that at its next session the Committee will be in a position to undertake a substantive study of this complex subject with a view to proceeding very shortly to negotiations on a treaty.

The various negotiations to which we have just referred are, first and foremost, of prime interest to the international community as a whole. Disarmament should be a matter for all of us. Thus, the United Nations must be in a position to play its role fully. I should like to refer briefly to three aspects of this: international verification, the link between disarmament and development and institutional matters.

As we are all aware, international verification is a fundamental prerequisite for undertaking disarmament; it is an irreplaceable factor for both security and confidence. The acceptance without reservation of this principle and of the provisions in disarmament agreements designed to give practical effect to it is the test of the political will in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

It is important that the United Nations should be able to fulfil in this area the responsibility for which it is best fitted. It was in this spirit that France proposed four years ago that an international satellite control agency be established which could contribute, first, to verification of the extent to which disarmament agreements were being respected and, secondly, to monitoring crises or peace-keeping, particularly in assisting the Security Council. The technology of observation satellites is gradually spreading and a growing number of States will have their own national systems in years to come. It would be illogical for the international community not to be able to make use of these methods as well. The second special session was unable to discuss the report on this subject which had been prepared for it by the Group of Experts. This report is before us today. It is for the delegations that are interested to consider what proposals should be made to enable us to consider this long-term and extremely complex enterprise. The French delegation hopes that a draft resolution will be adopted at this session confirming the international community's interest in this project and decision to advance its preparations to deal with it.

Respect for agreements which are aimed not at disarmament but at the use of weapons is an important subject and a very sensitive one for all States. Such agreements rarely contain any arrangements for monitoring respect for their provisions. As we see it, the United Nations can fill this gap by appropriate procedures until more formal provisions are adopted, if that seems useful.

This is true of the 1925 Protocol prohibiting the use of chemical and biological weapons. France is the depositary of that Protocol. It is particularly anxious that this Protocol be respected and that its authority be maintained. We consider that its goals could be usefully served by establishing a procedure for the examination of allegations of failure to observe its provisions.

(Mr. de La Corce, France)

The relationship between disarmament and development also offers great scope for action by the United Nations. The French Government attaches great importance to this relationship being given practical effect. This is why we should like the report of the Group of Experts on this subject, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Thorsson, to be followed by other studies dealing more specifically with the establishment of a disarmament for development fund.

In order to play its full role in disarmament, the United Nations must have the appropriate institutions available. In this connection, we believe that the status of the Centre for Disarmament should be re-examined in order better to adapt it to the increased workload.

We were very interested to see the Secretary-General's note on the Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies. We consider that the Board, over and above its mandate to carry out studies, might play a very useful role in counselling the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and as an adviser to the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Disarmament Campaign.

We hope that this will help to win more public support for disarmament by providing the public at large, in accordance with the directives adopted at the second special session, with objective and well-balanced information which is widely distributed in all countries. Research institutes should also make their own contributions to this.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), created two years ago, has done remarkable work. It carries out a most useful function, the preparation of objective and detailed studies focused particularly on the long term. We hope that the present session will be in a position to confirm its final status.

Finally, as far as the Committee on Disarmament is concerned, it is our hope that this body will be in a position next year to take a decision on a slight increase in its membership, which would not, of course, affect its status as a negotiating body. We believe that such a decision would show a very desirable degree of openness of mind and would give legitimate satisfaction to those Governments which show an active interest in disarmament. We hope that the General Assembly will be in a position to adopt a recommendation along these lines.

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

An appraisal of the many and diverse efforts in the field of disarmament, which has been the purport of my statement, shows that in many areas initiatives have been undertaken and strategy has been mapped out. This was not true a year ago, and the results, which many found disappointing, of the second special session on disarmament have had little effect.

What has been initiated and is going on now shows that within the international community there is a sort of moral or political imperative operating. We have to negotiate on disarmament. The major Powers are aware of this; they bear the main responsibility. We have no illusions about the obstacles that stand in our path, but awareness is growing of the vital interest which should be preserved, and there is a better understanding of the fundamental assistance which disarmament can provide, if it is carried out with respect for security. Thus, in a divided world disarmament must necessarily appear as one of those rare ideals regarding which the international community can be unanimous. That unanimity can be strengthened and this indeed gives us food for hope.

Miss DEVER (Belgium) (interpretation from French): I should like to extend to the Chairman of our Committee the hearty congratulations of the delegation of Belgium on his election to his post. The long experience he has acquired in various United Nations bodies, and the talent he has shown, are sure indications that our work will be conducted effectively. Our congratulations go also to the other Committee officers.

I should like to take this opportunity also to say to the two winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, one of whom is among us, how happy we are that the choice of the Norwegian Parliament fell on them. In congratulating Mrs. Alva Myrdal and Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles we are conscious above all of their great work in the service of one of the noblest of all causes: that of peace and disarmament.

The year which is coming to an end was to have marked a new stage in our Organization's work for disarmament. We devoted a great deal of effort, imagination and time to the preparations for the twelfth special session in the hope that further progress would be made in an area which is, and must remain, at the centre of our work.

My colleague, the representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the 10 countries of the European Community, has conveyed to this Committee our thoughts on the results of the special session - our disappointments, of course, but also our continuing hopes. I shall not return to that subject.

Instead, I should like, before reviewing some of the specific problems which seem to us to deserve special attention, to reflect on a general thought expressed by the Foreign Minister of Belgium, Mr. Leo Tindemans, in the General Assembly on 29 September this year. Recalling that the arms race is but a symptom of a more serious evil, and that it has its roots in the heightening of international tensions, he concluded that "We have to reduce tensions before we disarm nations" (A/37/PV.10, p. 112)

Disarmament is often called a generous cause. I think that means that in the final analysis it comes down to an appeal to generosity; an appeal by the weak to the strong to abandon some of their strength; an appeal by nations which feel unarmed or threatened that the more powerful, without compromising their own security, should renounce a part of their armaments; and finally, an appeal by the poor to the rich to use their wealth for purposes other than the quest for military power.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

We believe there are two reasons, complementary reasons, why this appeal to generosity has not yet been properly heeded.

If there are nations which, in spite of the provisions of the Charter, persist in preferring to settle their disputes with other nations by force, and to intimidate them or interfere in their internal affairs, it is not surprising that they are deaf to appeals to disarm. Furthermore, nations which feel themselves to be threatened, and which see the impotence of our Organization to ensure that they are protected against aggression, feel obliged to equip themselves with the weapons necessary to ensure their security.

The Secretary-General pointed out at the opening of the present session that the United Nations system of collective security is the best safeguard against aggression. The cause of peace will be best served by endowing that system with vigour and prestige. Mr. Perez de Cuellar added that

'Without such a system there will be no reliable defence or shelter for the small and weak'. (A/37/1, p. 5)

Thus, we are faced with a political problem, and if we want to attack the cause and not the symptoms of the evil we must devote ourselves above all to establishing in the world a political climate more propitious to trust, realism and good faith. That is one of the lessons to be drawn from the relative failure of the second special session devoted to disarmament.

Our primary task today is not so much to proclaim principles or express desires as to commit ourselves to creating conditions favourable to negotiation. Indeed, it is through negotiations conducted with patience and in good faith, and with the firm determination to achieve results acceptable to all parties, that we can create the international instruments that will strengthen and bolster trust among nations and ease tensions.

And here we must adopt a pragmatic approach, and recognize that certain forums are better suited than others for the negotiation of a given type of problem.

The build-up of strategic nuclear weapons is a threat to the whole of mankind, and no nation can remain indifferent to it. Nevertheless, we believe that, at least during the first stage, it is for the two main nuclear Powers

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

to seek, between themselves, means of bringing about a balanced reduction of this type of weapon. This is what they undertook in beginning the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) this summer at Geneva. We must encourage them, and urge them to achieve substantial results quickly. Similarly, we should welcome the commencement of negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear weapons, also at Geneva. It is particularly urgent that they achieve practical results and, if possible, the complete elimination of that type of weapon.

As our Organization has recognized, some tensions are felt with particular keenness in certain regions; consequently it is in the context of those regions that the problems in question can best be settled.

In Europe, the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions, which have been proceeding in Vienna for the past 10 years, should enter a decisive stage with the submission last summer of new proposals, and we hope this will be the case.

Finally, the Madrid meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe should be resumed shortly. We sincerely hope that the international conditions are present for achieving a balanced result and laying the foundations for a conference on disarmament in Europe.

But there are many areas - and not minor ones - in which our Organization has a more direct and active role to play, both through its deliberative bodies and, even more, through the Committee on Disarmament.

The prevention of nuclear war is one such area, which rightly occupies an increasingly important place in our deliberations. It might be useful for us to try to draw up specific measures, on a multilateral basis, to avert an accidental nuclear conflict and also to build confidence.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

Here we are touching upon an important aspect of the work of our Organization since the first special session devoted to disarmament. On the initiative of the Federal Republic of Germany, an exhaustive study of measures to promote confidence among nations has been successfully completed. These conclusions now need to have some prestige conferred upon them, and Belgium fully associates itself with the initiatives which are to be taken for this purpose.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that nuclear disarmament is unlikely in the absence of a satisfactory solution to the problem of conventional weapons. We are pleased that a study of conventional weapons began this summer. We hope that it will be actively pursued to its conclusion and thus provide us with sound bases for seeking a solution to a problem which is just as important as that of nuclear weapons, to which it is linked. Security forms a whole, and serious imbalances in conventional weapons could be a significant obstacle to the control and reduction of nuclear weapons.

I do not wish to repeat everything that has been said on behalf of the Ten concerning the work of the Committee on Disarmament. I merely wish to point out that it is important that we be able soon to reap the tangible harvest of its labours.

The outlook in two areas is particularly promising: chemical weapons and radiological weapons.

Work on elaborating a convention completely banning chemical weapons is moving along very nicely, and one can look forward to the resumption of that work in January, provided that the negotiators are not diverted from their objective by procedural manoeuvres or quarrels. The political will to attain an agreement acceptable to everyone must be maintained and if necessary bolstered. This Committee must see to it that it is done, by reaffirming its will through the voice of all delegations present.

As regards the banning of radiological weapons, the conditions have now been fulfilled for the Committee to negotiate a link between the banning of these weapons and the question of the protection of nuclear installations.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

Belgium attributes equal importance to these two problems, even if their solution requires different methods. A way must be found out of the present impasse so that the Committee can complete its first international agreement. We do not believe that the search for a formula acceptable to all is facilitated by drawing any link between an attack on a nuclear installation and nuclear war itself.

Over the longer term, there are two other drafts which have deserved the attention of the Committee on Disarmament.

During the summer it began consideration of an issue that is at the very heart of the negotiations on a convention on a complete cessation of nuclear-weapon tests, namely verification. This task has only just begun and must be resumed early next year, in particular on the question of international verification.

As regards the prevention of the arms race in outer space, this is an area where developments are moving along very swiftly. Those areas which are potentially the most destabilizing must be identified, and effective control through internationally verifiable measures must be established. We believe that the Committee on Disarmament must move in this direction.

As regards the General Assembly, Belgium believes that it can help to create a framework promoting the conclusion of agreements. The Foreign Minister of Belgium, Mr. Tindemans, stressed at the beginning of this session the important role which regional organizations must play, for they are in a better position accurately to assess the state of tension existing in their region and therefore they can best enable regional measures to be taken.

He also proposed that these organizations help the Secretary-General to prepare his statement on the evolution of the international situation, which is advocated in the report of the Palme Commission.

It was with this thought in mind that Belgium, during the second special session devoted to disarmament, presented a memorandum on regional disarmament, defining in the following terms the dual function that the United Nations must play: on the one hand, it must promote the process of reflection and analysis, and possibly concrete negotiations at the regional level and, on the other hand, it must establish a link between regional action and that undertaken at the world-wide level.

(Miss Dever, Belgium)

Belgium is prepared to submit the draft resolution attached to that memorandum to the First Committee for consideration. We would be pleased to have observations from Member States so that we can determine whether the consensus which made possible the adoption of resolutions 35/156 D and 36/97 H can also be maintained in support of this proposal.

We also believe that the General Assembly should contribute to the solution of questions which present particular difficulties because of their politically sensitive nature or their juridical or technological complexity. The question of the control of a ban on the use of chemical or bacteriological weapons should be included among these questions.

Belgium described a study on this important question in a memorandum presented to the special session but, like many other proposals, it was not considered.

Considering that the idea that we put forward might also make it possible to overcome certain obstacles in defining the scope of the convention banning chemical weapons, Belgium placed this matter before the Committee on Disarmament early in the summer session.

But we hope that our proposal, and those being envisaged by many other States, will now be considered more systematically within the United Nations. We might then put forward a further proposal, or join in any other initiative which might be intended to make up for serious shortcomings in international legislation on chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The task that we have before us is immense. But let us also recall that a building is built stone by stone. Every concrete measure that we can agree on together will be a useful and important contribution to the maintenance of peace.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Among the main trends in efforts to avert the arms race and to reduce the danger of war, one of the most important places is taken up by the problem of prohibiting chemical weapons. Even at the beginning of the century, these weapons ended hundreds of thousands of lives, and disfigured millions. The people of South-East Asia still remember very vividly the

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numerous human victims and their sufferings, and also the incalculable damage caused to the natural environment by the use of chemical weapons by the United States in their aggressive wars against the peoples of Indo-China.

As we see from document A/37/377, the targets of chemical attacks at that time were more than 40 per cent of the arable land and timber lands in South Viet Nam. As a result of that chemical warfare, 2 million people were affected, of whom 3,500 died.

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According to data published by the Library of Congress, the toxic chemicals used by the United States in South Viet Nam amounted to 6 lbs per inhabitant. The assertion that the substances used were simply defoliants is both cynical and far from the truth. The incidence of cancer, interference with the genetic machinery and birth defects are by no means the full list of the consequences of the use of those substances, as American veterans of the Viet Nam war have testified.

Chemical weapons, which are lethal even in microscopic doses, are, together with nuclear and bacteriological weapons, among the most dangerous and most barbaric forms of weapons of mass destruction. They are comparatively simple to produce. With the increased probability of their use, there is obviously an increased risk of dire consequences for the future of mankind and of our earth.

The position of the Soviet State with regard to chemical weapons is clear and unambiguous: they should not be allowed on this planet. The efforts of the international community should be directed towards outlawing them once and for all.

Unlike the imperialist States, the Soviet Union has never resorted to chemical weapons or made them available to others. For example, it did not need, as the United States did, 50 years of thought to adhere to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibited the use in war of asphyxiating and other poisonous gases or bacteriological weapons. Unlike some other States, the Soviet Union has not tried to undermine the effectiveness of that Protocol. The Soviet Union was one of the first to adhere to the Protocol and it has unswervingly enhanced its significance and sought to increase the number of parties to it.

It was precisely the Soviet Union and other socialist countries that took the initiative in 1969 concerning the inclusion of an item on the prohibition of chemical weapons on the agenda of the General Assembly and submitted a draft international convention on the subject. They also took subsequent initiatives in efforts to have the matter considered in various international forums.

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On the other hand, from the outset the Western countries did everything they could to resist an effective resolution of this question, by protracting and confusing consideration of it. It was precisely the United States that unilaterally broke off talks with the Soviet Union on the prohibition of chemical weapons. The United States alone among the 157 members of the United Nations voted against General Assembly resolution 36/96 B, which called upon all States to refrain from production and deployment of binary and other new forms of chemical weapons, as well as from stationing them in those States where there are no such weapons at present. The United States delegation was also the only one to abstain in the vote on General Assembly resolution 36/96 A, which urged the Committee on Disarmament to continue its work on a convention to prohibit chemical weapons within the relevant organizational framework.

At all international forums where the question of chemical weapons is considered the position of the United States is the main barrier to any progress. This policy of blocking progress is becoming more and more overt.

Although American experts have estimated the total stocks of chemical weapons that can be mobilized in the United States at 150,000 to 300,000 tonnes, with approximately 3 million units of ammunition available for their use, and have also estimated that the present arsenal of chemical weapons in the United States includes about 100 different types, the United States has recently been particularly interested in the creation of new forms of chemical weapons and has been preparing for their large-scale production.

What I have described is by no means confined to binary weapons. The fundamental research basis for developing other forms of toxic substances is expanding. Many firms and institutes in the United States are trying to discover poisonous substances with super-toxicity for which there are at present no antidotes. In particular, studies are being carried out on toxins from vegetable and animal sources, such as palitoxin and ricin.

To judge from the statements made by representatives of the Washington Administration, the super-armament of the American army with the most modern forms of chemical weapons is calculated, as a senior representative of the Pentagon said in Congress on 15 September 1981, to enable it to wage a large-scale chemical war in Europe against the Warsaw Pact countries. Further evidence of this is the fact that cruise missiles, flying bombs and

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artillery shells armed with chemicals are to be deployed at United States bases in Western European countries. These chemical weapons will be carried on aircraft carriers cruising in the East Atlantic and the Mediterranean. It is clear from this that the programme declared by the United States is a new step on the dangerous path of increasing its arsenals of weapons of mass destruction.

We often hear that the over-armament of the American forces with chemical weapons is an internal affair of the United States; that it has been planned and is being carried out for purely defensive purposes. However, the facts show something quite different. Chemical weapons are not defensive but offensive; they are weapons of aggression and mass destruction, aimed primarily at unarmed populations.

The United States Defense Secretary stated publicly that the United States would constantly threaten the Soviet Union with the use of chemical weapons and would continue to regard them as an integral part of any possible conflict. In an interview with Voice of America, he gave us to understand that the United States leadership was studying a possible review of international agreements and treaties which prohibit the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

The accumulation of tremendous supplies of chemical weapons might well cost the lives of thousands of people, particularly in the densely populated conditions of Europe. As a result of the activities of the United States Administration, there is a growing danger of the proliferation of chemical weapons throughout the world.

Including binary weapons in the arsenals of nations would put serious additional obstacles in the way of reaching agreement to prohibit chemical weapons, since it would be very difficult to guarantee effective methods of control.

Washington would like people to forget that it was precisely the United States, and no other country, that used chemical weapons in the past on a scale unprecedented in human history. Perhaps the United States Administration is more interested in preventing the prohibition of chemical weapons and preparing the political and psychological ground for the rehabilitation and

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possible subsequent use of such weapons. A disreputable aim is served by disreputable means.

The acquisition of additional chemical weapons by the United States must be seen in the context of unsavoury attacks and insinuations against the Soviet Union. However, these do not hold water. It is easy to read between the lines, and this applies to any serious thinking person in the United States itself.

In their report distributed as document A/37/233, which was produced on the basis of a careful analysis of all the points made in the notorious report of the American State Department, a group of Soviet experts demonstrated the complete invalidity of the so-called data and evidence on which the State Department tried to accuse the Soviet Union. I should like to give some examples which prove that the assertions made in the State Department report are without substance. The State Department report spoke of incidents in which people allegedly died of poisoning after drinking water from ponds in the so-called yellow rain areas. However, death could occur only if several tons of microtoxins were used over each hectare of the pond. But in that case the roofs of buildings, the trees and the soil would have been covered with a thick layer of powder, and there would then have been no point in resorting to the contrived methods of sample analysis which served as the basis for the assertions in the report.

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The report goes on to quote the results of an analysis of the blood to determine white-corpuscle content. The analysis carried out at the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases allegedly showed that eight of the nine "victims" tested had a depressed white cell count. However, it has been reliably established that a single administration of T-2 toxin to mammals - which would be the case in a chemical attack - causes, on the contrary, a temporary increase in the number of white cells. A reduction in the number of white cells - leucopenia - is observed only after multiple administration of such mycotoxins over a period of several weeks. The available scientific data indicate that leucopenia occurs only as a result of prolonged daily ingestion of the mycotoxin-contaminated grain in food. The data on the supposed depletion of white corpuscles in the blood indicate only that these "victims" might have consumed contaminated food over a prolonged period.

A reduction in the white-corpuscle level may also be the result of factors other than mycotoxins. Leucopenia is observed in cases of chronic poisoning with phenol, and especially with dioxin, which is still present today in rather large quantities in the natural environment of Indo-China as a result of the chemical warfare conducted by the United States Army in that region. Lastly, leucopenia is also observed in people who have suffered from virus diseases, including influenza.

Moreover, the use of chemical weapons can always be demonstrated by means of tangible evidence. Physical and biological evidence of the conduct of chemical warfare by the United States in South-East Asia from 1961 to 1972 has been preserved to this day.

Although invented stories of USSR involvement in chemical warfare in South-East Asia and Afghanistan have been spread for several years, so far not one item of direct physical evidence has been produced.

In the report of the United States Department of State and in other American documents, including those of Congressional hearings, there are descriptions of hundreds of cases of the "use" of toxic agents. ...

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But despite the profusion of such observations, for some reason the "eyewitnesses" did not possess a single shell or bomb fragment, a single rocket, a single canister or a single cylinder.

In the absence of physical evidence of the use of chemical weapons, the main argument used in the State Department report is the assertion that the symptoms of intoxication described by "eyewitnesses" and the symptoms of trichothecene intoxication described in the medical and other scientific literature coincide.

These assertions and declarations are untrue. In October 1981, the magazine Nature printed a statement by Dr. D. Paterson, of the Central Veterinary Laboratory at Weybridge, who is experienced in research on the effect of mycotoxins on animals: "All the symptoms observed by the eyewitnesses were not so specific that they can be considered objective evidence. The symptoms of intoxication caused by mycotoxins vary widely, depending on the type, and for that reason it is not obvious that the symptoms described could have been caused by mycotoxin poisoning." The report also ignores the fact that not a single victim was in fact presented to the doctors.

The similarities in the poisoning symptoms described by the "witnesses" from various parts of Laos, Thailand and Kampuchea are not surprising, since these statements were obviously prepared by the same people.

The conclusion that can be drawn from a study of the report of the United States State Department to the Congress dated 22 March 1982 is a simple one. That document is simply a collection of unsubstantiated inventions and accusations devoid of any proof. They do not even stand up to any scientific criticism, nor are they subject to any logical analysis.

The major American ecologist Westing recently warned that the United States would bear main responsibility for a possible chemical arms race since

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Washington is using its propaganda in order to create an atmosphere in which Congress would finance military programmes for chemical weapons.

The interests of all peoples, including the people of the United States, make it essential that everything be done to put an end to the arms race in this extremely dangerous area. Chemical weapons of mass destruction should be prohibited.

The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR shares the concern that insufficient progress was achieved in the negotiations of the Disarmament Committee in Geneva, concern that has already been expressed by the delegations of Hungary, Sweden, Poland, Norway, Yugoslavia and others.

An important way to achieve progress is to consider the proposal put forward by the Soviet Union at the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament with reference to the fundamental provisions of a convention prohibiting the elaboration, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction. That proposal is aimed at stepping up the common efforts of all States members of the Disarmament Committee working on the drawing up of this kind of multilateral convention. The draft proposed by the Soviet Union is not an exposition of one party's view but takes into account the views of other States and includes the very thorny question of verification. The draft convention is a further important proof of the genuine concern of its authors to achieve speedy progress in this very responsible area and shows also the constructive nature of their efforts.

While work is under way on such an agreement, States should show restraint and political willingness to avoid any action which might further complicate these talks or make them difficult. In this connection it is particularly important for States to refrain from siting chemical weapons in other countries. That would provide an additional measure of trust and would avert a possible proliferation of this terrible type of weapon, and would to a certain extent remove the impetus for a new step in the arms race in chemical weapons. It would also confirm the seriousness of intention of States to achieve success in these negotiations.

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The interests of prohibiting chemical weapons would be served by the reopening of the talks between the Soviet Union and the United States on the prohibition of these weapons and work by the Committee on Disarmament to conclude a convention on the prohibition of the manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Mankind impatiently hopes that chemical weapons will be prohibited. It is the direct duty of all States to bend every effort to ensure that this hope is realized.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Mr. ARSOV (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) (interpretation from French): The delegation of UNESCO is grateful to this Committee for the opportunity to speak at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly on agenda item 50, "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session".

First of all, on behalf of the Director General of UNESCO, I should like to congratulate warmly the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize, Mrs. Myrdal, former Director of the Department of Social Sciences of UNESCO, and Ambassador García-Robles, who have received a well-deserved tribute for their remarkable contributions to peace and disarmament.

The tenth special session of the General Assembly in its Final Document entrusted to UNESCO several important tasks, which that organization has endeavoured to carry out during the past four years. The purpose of my statement is to review briefly UNESCO's activities in four main areas under the mandate conferred upon it: information, study and research, co-operation with non-governmental organizations, and disarmament education.

The work carried out by UNESCO since the tenth special session in the area of information relating to disarmament has been determined in particular by two resolutions, adopted in 1978 and 1980 by the General Conference, dealing with UNESCO's role in the creation of a climate of public opinion conducive to the halting of the arms race and the transition to disarmament.

Under those resolutions the General Conference invited the Director General to undertake or encourage interdisciplinary research or symposiums on such themes as the possibility of increasing the publication and dissemination of information on the arms race and efforts to halt and reverse it, and also to consider extending the use of UNESCO's information channels in order to mobilize world public opinion about the dangers of the arms race and the need for disarmament, for example, by increasing the publication of pamphlets and books on the subject and holding art exhibitions and film festivals.

Much emphasis has thus been placed on disarmament in the implementation of programmes of public information during the period under review. The text of the Director General's address at the tenth special session was reproduced in a pamphlet entitled The Will for Peace which was widely distributed in English and French.

As a follow-up to the adoption of the "Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War", the text of that Declaration was published in 16 languages. Studies were carried out on how the press of certain countries - Austria, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom - had reflected and reported on the adoption of the Declaration. Consultations were held on ways to promote the inclusion of the principles of the Declaration in the communications curricula of teaching and training institutions. A study of the background to the Declaration appeared in 1980 in the series Reports and papers in mass communications. In compliance with the aforementioned resolutions, UNESCO has also used its information organs to promote disarmament. Two examples can be mentioned here: special issues of the Unesco Courier, a monthly published in 26 languages, and activities during Disarmament Week.

The Unesco Courier devoted special emphasis to disarmament and in particular to the arms race in an issue of April 1979. That issue contained long extracts from a United Nations publication entitled "The economic and social consequences of the arms race and of military expenditures", prepared by an international group of experts. The United Nations Secretariat noted with appreciation the usefulness of that issue and asked UNESCO to help in its dissemination through United Nations information centres around the world during Disarmament Week. The issue of September 1980 of the Unesco Courier was devoted to the theme "Disarmament Education: A Farewell to Arms?". A third issue of the magazine, in March 1982, presented, under the title "Swords into Plowshares" presented long extracts from

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the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "Study on the relationship between disarmament and development".

Disarmament Week has been a public information activity of significance for UNESCO, since 1978. As a general rule, it has organized an exhibition of the publications of UNESCO and the United Nations on disarmament, and a message by the Director General was sent to National Commissions, Associated Schools and National Federations of UNESCO clubs, and permanent delegations and staff members. In addition to the information activities carried out during Disarmament Week, a special exhibition was organized at UNESCO Headquarters during the twelfth special session devoted to disarmament, to draw public attention to the importance of that event.

As the General Assembly requested in paragraph 103 of the Final Document of the tenth special session, UNESCO intensified its activities in facilitating research and publications on disarmament, particularly in the developing countries.

In accordance with the programme approved by the General Conference of UNESCO, studies and research programmes have been carried out, many of which have resulted in publications. First of all, a multidisciplinary study was published entitled "Obstacles to Disarmament and Ways of Overcoming Them", containing the documents of a meeting of experts held in 1978 and other documents of interest both to specialists in international relations and to the general public.

An annotated bibliography and report of the trends in research on the economic and social consequences of the arms race and disarmament were published in English in 1978, and then in French and Spanish, in the series, Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences. Another annotated bibliography, entitled "The Threat of Modern Warfare to Man and his Environment", was published in 1979 in three languages, in the same series.

Two new multidisciplinary research projects were completed during the period under review: one on military research and development and its impact on the scientific community and on scientific and technological development, and the other on strategic doctrines and their effects on disarmament prospects.

(Mr. Arsov, UNESCO)

As regards the activities of UNESCO under its programme for the development of national and regional centres and other facilities for peace research, I would refer to the publication of the "Directory of Peace Research Institutions" and also the first issue of the UNESCO Yearbook of Peace and Conflict Studies. The Directory reports on the activities of institutions dealing with questions of peace and disarmament and gives detailed information on each of them, including titles of research documents and publications on disarmament. The Yearbook includes an annotated bibliography on the relation between disarmament and development.

UNESCO also decided to devote a publication to aspects of disarmament related to international law. This publication will appear in the series New Challenges to International Law, and will deal specifically with the theme "The international law of disarmament as a new branch of international law".

(Mr. Arsov, UNESCO)

In addition to the above-mentioned projects, UNESCO has carried out new activities in multidimensional research on the following subjects: the role of scientists in the arms race and in efforts to promote disarmament; different perceptions of security and their effect on the arms race; the social, economic and cultural effects of the arms race and, in particular, the militarization of societies.

The project on the role of scientists in the arms race and in disarmament was carried out in the general context of the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament. To this end an international symposium was organized jointly with the Pugwash Conferences on science and international problems in February 1982 to examine the manuscript of a publication entitled Scientists, the Arms Race and Disarmament and it formulated appropriate recommendations. These conclusions and recommendations were published just before the twelfth special session.

There are two forms of co-operation between UNESCO and international non-governmental organizations. One takes the form of promoting, encouraging and supporting the activities of these disarmament-oriented organizations, and the other of encouraging these organizations to play a larger part in UNESCO's activities in this area.

Thus, UNESCO granted a financial contribution to the International Institute for Peace in Vienna to organize jointly with the Tampere Peace Research Institute of Tampere, Finland, an international symposium on research and teaching in disarmament in various disciplines of higher education. A report on the work of the symposium, which took place in 1980 and contained appropriate recommendations, was submitted to the World Congress on Education for Disarmament.

The World Peace Council, which maintains with UNESCO a consultative relationship, has with its support done much to promote disarmament education in this area. These themes have played a considerable part in the agenda of the meetings of its executive bodies, in particular during the meeting held in Panama in September 1979. The Council has, moreover, carried out other activities aimed at preparing for the World Congress on Education for Disarmament.

(Mr. Arsov, UNESCO)

Following that Congress, financial contributions were also given to activities concerned with education for disarmament. By way of example, I might mention the contribution offered to the Inter-University Centre of Higher University Studies in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia for the organization of a course on education for disarmament in April 1982 and a similar subsidy given to Teachers' College of Columbia University, New York, for the organization of a seminar in June 1982.

Education for disarmament is obviously the area in which UNESCO has made its primary contribution as it has implemented the decisions and recommendations of the tenth special session devoted to disarmament.

The UNESCO delegation to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly reported to this Committee on the results of the work on the World Congress on Education for Disarmament which was held in June 1980. The text of that report and of its final document was reproduced in the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, volume V, of 1980. That is why I will content myself with stressing those activities which have been carried out to implement the recommendations of the Congress.

First of all, UNESCO organized international consultations on education for disarmament in August 1981 in order to consider measures taken in relation to each of the recommendations of the Congress and to prepare a detailed plan of action spread out over a certain period of time on the understanding that this should coincide with the next UNESCO medium-term plan for 1984-1989.

The detailed plan of action for education for disarmament, prepared on the basis of suggestions made during consultations, appears in UNESCO's contribution to the 1981 edition of the Disarmament Yearbook of the United Nations.

A further important follow-up of the World Congress on Education for Disarmament was UNESCO's organization of regional seminars to train university professors.

The first two seminars of this kind, were held in Caracas, Venezuela, in October 1981 and in Jakarta, Indonesia, in August 1982. Among the subjects considered by the university professors and researchers were: the content and desirability of education for disarmament in the region, bibliographical services, strategic doctrines, arms and disarmament control, the dynamics of armament in its relationship with third-world development, programme of detailed studies etc.

(Mr. Arsov, UNESCO)

The participants formulated proposals regarding specific activities which might be undertaken to help those who attended the seminar achieve their ultimate objective, namely, the integration of disarmament questions in the teaching and research programmes of the countries of the region.

Finally, as regards education for disarmament at the university level, I should perhaps mention the collection of texts entitled Armaments, Arms Control and Disarmament published by UNESCO in 1981 and made up of eight parts: the arms race and its social-political implications, the dynamics of the arms race, arms limitation and disarmament, the United Nations and disarmament, strategies of a few countries, public opinion and education for disarmament and so on.

In conclusion, I should like to say that UNESCO's medium-term plan, which I have already mentioned, is a six-year plan with a fixed-term horizon and is at the same time intersectoral and interdisciplinary. This plan for 1984-1989 has been drawn up as a function of our analysis of world problems followed by an examination of their links with the fields of competence of UNESCO as well as a definition of the objectives of the Organization and the means to be employed in attaining those objectives.

The plan will be submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO at its fourth special session, which will be held at UNESCO's headquarters from 23 November to 3 December next. The analysis of world problems contained in this document deals in part with peace and the arms race and one of the major problems will concern peace and human rights, particularly activities linked to disarmament.

(Mr. Arsov, UNESCO)

Invited to make a statement to the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, the Director-General of UNESCO, stated:

"Indeed, UNESCO believes that it is its primary responsibility within its areas of competence to do all it can to help ease international tension and to encourage the maintenance of peace and disarmament. Standing at the crossroad of all the activities of the human mind, open to all the works through which peoples express their feelings, UNESCO constantly is alert, striving fully to capture the pulse of the world.

(A/S-12/PV.7 p. 83)

By its many decisions aimed at mobilizing education, science, culture and communication in the service of peace, the Governing Council and the General Conference of UNESCO have shown that they have been convinced that UNESCO can and must meet this challenge.

Mr. RAKOTOZAFY (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Sir, allow me first of all to carry out an agreeable duty - that of addressing the warm congratulations of the Malagasy delegation to the Chairman on his election to the chairmanship of this Committee. My delegation is particularly pleased that it is a distinguished son of Africa who has demonstrated such devotion and experience in the cause of disarmament and peace who is guiding our work. We naturally also address our congratulations to you and to the other officers of the Committee.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere congratulations to the two Nobel Peace Prize laureates of 1982, Mrs. Alva Myrdal and Ambassador Garcia Robles. We should like to echo the words of those who have stated here that their example can further stimulate the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to promote disarmament and thus help to consolidate peace and strengthen international security.

The adoption of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament had aroused a great deal of optimism and hope in the hearts and minds of peoples. It was considered to be of historic significance, for it represented for the first time in the annals of disarmament negotiations a consensus leading to general and complete disarmament. Since international security is closely related to disarmament measures, the results of the second special session were disappointing for the vast majority of States, which hoped that it would arrive at specific measures for maintaining and giving further momentum to the spirit which had emerged in 1978.

In fact, since that time the international situation has undergone a series of events that are not likely to promote the cause of disarmament: hotbeds of tension remain and are growing worse in certain regions of the world; strengthening the feeling of mistrust among States; the arms race is continuing at a feverish pace and has now reached the fabulous sum of over \$600 million a year, in a world where famine, poverty and disease require sustained international solidarity; and the theory that a limited nuclear war could be waged and even won is helping to shake the already greatly eroded confidence between the two major Powers, to increase the anxiety of States and to make their security even more precarious.

(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

Furthermore, the major Powers tend to see international relations through the prism of their economic and strategic interests, disregarding the security of other countries and the survival of mankind as a whole. This has resulted in a paralysis of the work of United Nations bodies that deal with questions of disarmament.

In light of this crisis, we believe that we should encourage as much as possible efforts aimed at averting nuclear war. In our opinion, the halting of the nuclear arms race is an urgent necessity. As long as relations between the major Powers are based on the balance of forces, determination of which necessarily hinges on measures which are both subjective and approximate, and in view of the fact that no party agrees to negotiate from what it regards as a position of weakness, it necessarily follows that there will be endless rivalry in the improvement of nuclear weapons, which in the final analysis conceals the desire to achieve military superiority.

We believe that a freeze of existing nuclear weapons and the immediate cessation of nuclear-weapon testing will help to improve the international climate and will thus augur well for any serious discussions concerning nuclear disarmament.

The threat of the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and the safeguards which they should be granted remain at the centre of our concern. We have noted the statements made in this connection and can only welcome with relief any similar declaration on the part of all the nuclear Powers. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that the security of States which do not possess nuclear weapons cannot be assured in an effective manner without a solid political and legal basis.

We fully share the apprehension expressed in this Committee in connection with the trend towards the militarization of outer space. The international community is duty bound to make every necessary effort to thwart any attempt aimed at transferring military competition to outer space, for current technological capabilities risk confronting us with a situation which will once again elude all efforts at controlling it.

(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

We very much favour the idea of waging a world campaign in favour of disarmament. Although international public opinion is already well aware of various aspects of the question, we must not forget that the political will of Governments remains the determining factor in halting the arms race and in reducing and eliminating arms.

Voices of authority both within and outside of our Organization have not ceased to remind us of the interdependence of world stability and of economic and social development. They have on many occasions demonstrated that a minute percentage of the sum devoted to military expenditures would be sufficient to meet the crucial needs of developing countries, which make up three-quarters of mankind. We hope that common sense will finally prevail in making the choice, which should be clear-cut, between construction and destruction.

The present international situation requires increased co-operation between States so that negotiations may be resumed and so that the role of the United Nations may be strengthened, for it is not only a question of security but, above all, of the survival of mankind. In that perspective, we would call upon all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to reaffirm their adherence to the recommendations and decisions of the first special session.

The Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace has remained a dead letter because of military rivalry between the two major Powers. Equally, the Committee on Disarmament has not been able to fulfil its mandate because of the attitude of certain Powers; it is our hope that the Committee will achieve tangible results and will present constructive reports at the next session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Rakotozafy, Madagascar)

Without reopening the discussion of the Programme of Action and the priorities which have previously been defined in the Final Document, we cannot logically fail to subscribe to the practical measures which have been advocated in order to improve the international climate and to bring us closer to our long-sought goal of general and complete disarmament, because the international situation is such today that the international community must act immediately in order to prevent the destruction of our planet. If disarmament is recognized as something which concerns all States, the major Powers have particular responsibility in this matter and the international community is entitled to expect bold and sincere initiatives from them.

It is from this standpoint that my delegation will consider the various proposals to be presented in this Committee.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.