

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

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FIRST COMMITTEE
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VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. Elfaki (Sudan)
(Vice-Chairman)

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Mr. Perez Guerrero (Venezuela)
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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. van DONGEN (Netherlands): May I first of all express through you, Sir, the Netherlands delegation's satisfaction at the election of Ambassador Vraalsen as Chairman of this Committee. Equally, our congratulations go to you and to Mr. Gheorghe Tinca as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee. The composition of the Bureau assures us, by the experience and professional qualifications of its members, that our debates here will have an orderly and positive outcome.

Our thanks go to the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Gbeho of Ghana, for the work he did last year.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to share with you, Sir, and with our colleagues from all parts of the globe some of the Netherlands' thoughts and views regarding the ongoing efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Today's world does not present a rosy picture. Both the developed and the developing world are confronted with serious economic and financial problems which adversely affect the international situation as a whole. Against this background of world-wide economic stagnation the arms build-up, both conventional and nuclear, continues unabated. This general situation is an awkward one. The world community appears to be unable to organize itself more rationally, to sort itself out, and thereby to avoid the colossal waste inherent in the arms race and devote more of its resources to the economic well-being of mankind.

That being so, honesty compels us to admit that the increasing arms expenditures are mainly a reflection of the existence of fundamental political contrasts. In addition, the continuing use of force in contravention of the United Nations Charter aggravates the prevailing distrust, thus bringing us farther away from the climate of confidence that would promote disarmament.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

Since we last met in this Committee, the international climate that has prevailed in the world has not improved. East-West relations continue to be strained, though it has thus far been possible to avoid a major military conflict in Europe. But, at the same time, armed conflicts outside Europe unfortunately continue to take place owing to regional instabilities.

However regrettable this general state of affairs may be, we should not allow it to discourage us but, rather, should continue to devote our best efforts to balancing and stabilizing an international situation fraught with danger, through concrete and realistic measures. Our foremost objective should be the elimination of the scourge of war, which the Charter defines as its main aim. Measures in the field of arms control and disarmament should be concrete and realistic: Concrete because words by themselves cannot show us the way out of the many problems facing us. We must translate our discussions and our negotiations into concrete, equitable and verifiable measures of arms control and disarmament, capable of inspiring the confidence the world is so desperately in need of. Realistic because only realism can prevent us from reaching for the unattainable and instead help us to bring about what is within reach.

Realism means considering the world as it is, not as we should wish it to be -- without illusions but also without defeatism. It dictates the course we must follow -- that is, that only painstaking negotiations will allow for progress. It will admittedly be piecemeal, yet progress along these lines can be made.

Realism should also guide us when we consider the factors that have prevented the outbreak of a war in the European theatre, given the present nature of armaments on both sides. It obliges us to acknowledge that such a war has primarily been prevented by the very existence of what sometimes has been called the balance of terror. Nuclear deterrence has provided the basis for the existing stability. We may not, and indeed do not, like such a situation, but dislike will not make it disappear. Consequently, any realistic disarmament negotiation should use this fundamental fact as a point of departure. Whatever measures result from negotiations, they should avoid effects to the detriment of this basic stability.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

Maintenance of such a precarious stability is not the ultimate answer to the question of how to ensure peace and security in the world. But for the foreseeable future there is no viable alternative to the present-day strategy of nuclear deterrence. Stability should be preserved to the maximum extent possible, but, I hasten to add, this must be achieved at much lower levels of armaments. This task is all the more urgent since the built-in dynamics of the arms build-up threaten the stability we are so anxious to maintain. Quantitative and qualitative developments are taking place which have the potential to destabilize the situation. This is what disarmament and arms-control measures should prevent. In concrete terms, this should mean that at no stage of the disarmament process should the existing mutual deterrence be affected. Such realistic disarmament measures should in particular aim at avoiding any undermining of the second strike capabilities existing on both sides. Neither the fundamental philosophy underlying the conclusion of the 1972 anti-ballistic-missile Treaty nor the Treaty itself should be undermined.

To sum up, my delegation feels that the continuing objectives of the international community in the field of arms control and disarmament should be to prevent war, nuclear war in particular, through the maintenance of stability and the prevention of developments of a destabilizing nature.

I should like to dwell for a moment upon this very important concept of stability. Clearly, stability is one of the basic principles underlying the efforts of the international community to preserve peace and, at the same time, achieve disarmament and arms-control agreements. When used in this context, the concept of stability implies essentially that military forces be structured in such a way that neither side has any reason to fear offensive operations by the other. In this sense, stability is related to the equally important principle of balance. But there is more to it. Stability implies also that forces on both sides be so structured that there is no premium on attacking first. The notion has found wide application in the nuclear field, but it is also highly relevant to the conventional field and, as we shall see, to current developments in outer space.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

It goes without saying that the international community, as it has structured itself in the various disarmament forums, bears a very heavy responsibility. Our nations, our peoples demand of us that we spare no efforts to make headway, and they are fully entitled to do so. My delegation admits that the current international climate is not notably propitious to reaching concrete results in disarmament negotiations. The serious international situation, however, is not an excuse for slackening our efforts but, rather, an additional reason to intensify them. It is obvious that progress in the field of disarmament could contribute to the easing of a tense international situation.

The strategic arms reduction talks (START) and the talks on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) taking place between the United States and the Soviet Union offer the opportunity for these two countries to put into effect their special responsibility in regard to these matters. The START negotiations are the key to the achievement of a stable strategic balance at substantially lower levels. In this connection I want to emphasize the importance of achieving both substantially lower levels and greater stability.

The Netherlands welcomes the additional proposals the United States has made both in the previous and in the present round of START talks. These proposals take into account a number of specific Soviet concerns. We hope they will be reciprocated and thus lead to progress in the negotiations. A START agreement is of vital interest not only to the two parties directly involved but to the world as a whole. Of special importance to the Netherlands are the talks on intermediate-range nuclear forces. We continue to believe that the complete elimination of land-based longer-range INF missiles would be the best solution for all concerned. Zero on both sides remains the ultimate goal. Should it prove impossible to reach that goal in one step, then an interim solution should be sought providing for equal ceilings at the lowest possible level. Recently the United States has taken new initiatives which meet a number of Soviet concerns. We call on the Soviet Union to respond positively to these initiatives and to meet the legitimate Western security concerns created by the SS-20 deployments.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

In the particular context of intermediate-range nuclear weapons, stability and reasonable balance are as vital as they are in the field of strategic nuclear forces. The Soviet Union, having first disrupted the balance by building up its formidable force of SS-20 missiles, is now trying to convince the world that it is the West that is endangering stability by its plans partially to redress the situation. Apparently, the zero option should apply to the West only, while the Power that first raised the level of this type of armaments should go scot-free. The success of the INF talks, in which the Netherlands has a vital interest, will require abandoning such false logic and misleading propaganda and showing instead a genuine willingness to come to an equitable agreement.

What I have already said will, I hope, have made clear that the Netherlands attaches the highest importance to efforts aimed at making progress on nuclear disarmament measures. At the same time, I have stressed that we should be realistic. Nuclear weapons will not disappear overnight. In fact, their very existence has given rise to the paradoxical situation in which nuclear weapons simultaneously constitute the threat of and the deterrence to the unthinkable: the unprecedented catastrophe of a nuclear war. It would be unrealistic to assume that nuclear weapons could disappear or be disinvented; but what we can do is strive for a gradual reduction of our dependence on these weapons for our security, seek a balance at much lower levels and halt all developments which could have destabilizing consequences. To this end, more stable relations in the conventional field are also essential.

Attention tends to focus on nuclear issues. This is understandable but it should not make us neglect the issue of conventional weapons, whose power of destruction has been vastly increased by modern technology. Conventional forces absorb a much larger share of the world-wide expenditure than nuclear forces. Furthermore, the use of conventional weapons is, unlike that of nuclear weapons, a daily reality in many parts of the world. In Europe peace has been preserved but the conventional imbalance remains a potential source of instability. This conventional imbalance is one of the reasons of Western Europe's dependence on nuclear deterrence for its security. An agreement in Vienna on mutual and balanced force reductions could be an important first step towards the aim of a stable conventional balance at lower levels in Europe. Progress in the field of conventional

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

disarmament would reduce our dependence on nuclear deterrence and increase the possibilities for reductions in nuclear weapons. In January a new conference will start in Stockholm, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, which will seek agreement on a set of confidence- and security-building measures applicable to the whole of Europe. Such measures could do much to strengthen stability in Europe, by creating greater transparency and removing some of the uncertainties about military activities that can only too easily give rise to fear and misunderstanding.

The European situation clearly indicates how difficult it is to reduce dependence on nuclear weapons once they have become part and parcel of a regional balance - a balance that is bound to be complex. What we can and must do is to try and prevent a similar situation arising elsewhere in the world. Further proliferation of nuclear weapons would constitute a serious threat to international peace and security. The aim of strengthening the régime established by the Non-Proliferation Treaty is therefore a cornerstone of the Netherlands policy on nuclear disarmament and arms control. It follows that even-handed proposals to keep certain parts of the world free from nuclear weapons - like the announced Egyptian initiative - arouse our keenest interest.

The Netherlands is fully aware that progress in the negotiations on the existing nuclear armaments systems will have beneficial effects on non-proliferation, but it is possible to do more. My delegation wishes once again to underline the great importance it attaches to a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty. It is our firm conviction that such a treaty would constitute a contribution to non-proliferation, horizontal as well as vertical, which can hardly be overestimated. As such, a comprehensive test ban treaty would be a major contribution to more stable relations in the world - provided, I hasten to add, that it would do away with all test explosions for all times in all environments. In other words, the Netherlands attaches great importance to the comprehensive character of such a treaty. Its scope should encompass the so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. Failing to prohibit such explosions would make verification virtually impossible.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

One should not lose sight of the fact that the technologies used for nuclear-
weapons testing and for conducting nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes
are basically the same. As a result, military benefits could be derived
from either type of explosions, and a treaty that would leave room for
explosions for peaceful purposes would render a comprehensive test ban
treaty devoid of meaning.

We are convinced that while a number of problems, technical as well
as organizational, remain to be solved, adequate verification of a future
comprehensive test ban treaty is feasible. The Netherlands would appeal
to all delegations at present involved in the deliberations in the Committee
on Disarmament on a comprehensive test ban treaty to approach the remaining
problems in this field in a positive and realistic frame of mind.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

May I now turn to the subject of the so-called negative security assurances. We remain convinced of the importance of continuing efforts to reach agreement on a common formula which would encompass all the assurances which each of the nuclear-weapon States has individually given to the non-nuclear-weapon States. Such a common formula - to be incorporated for example in a Security Council resolution - would lend added weight to these individual assurances and would, we hope, increase the confidence of the non-nuclear-weapon States that they would not be the victim of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. Agreement on such a formula would thus strengthen the non-proliferation régime. The key to the solution of this question is, of course, primarily in the hands of the nuclear-weapon States, whose responsibility it is to bring their respective negative security assurances closer to each other. The Netherlands, however, takes a keen interest in this issue and remains prepared to lend a helping hand wherever useful and possible.

I mentioned earlier the primary importance of stability to prevent war and maintain international peace and security. The notion of stability is particularly relevant to outer space.

Man's entry into outer space has opened prospects hitherto undreamt of by mankind. The progressive exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes has been of enormous benefit to all peoples, in accordance with the desire expressed in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. Many exclusively peaceful endeavours, such as research into the earth's resources, were furthered by satellites and their ground support specifically designed for these purposes. At the same time, their use for military purposes, as components of defensive and, in some cases, offensive systems, was actively pursued. In many cases military and civilian functions are combined in one and the same satellite. On the whole, the military functions of satellites seem to have a stabilizing effect. Observation, early-warning and communications satellites are essential elements in verifying compliance with arms-control measures, in preventing surprise attacks and in ensuring maintenance of communications in periods of tension and conflict. This observation leads us to the inevitable and realistic conclusion that, at least for the foreseeable future, complete demilitarization of outer space is not a desirable goal.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

If one then concludes that satellites are on the whole important to stability, it follows that anti-satellite weapons are destabilizing.

Anti-satellite weapons are a matter of grave concern. Their entry into the arena might well be the first step in a long and costly arms race in outer space. Their development and perfection may lead to a situation that puts a premium on attacking first. Because of the important role satellites play in overall defence capabilities, eliminating these satellites at the outset of a conflict might give the aggressor a very substantial advantage. This is, I believe, a clear example of a situation we should avoid.

We propose to deal simultaneously with the problems posed by anti-satellite weapons from two angles: satellites should be declared inviolable and, in conjunction with such a measure, the testing, stationing and use of specific anti-satellite systems should be prohibited. This is the approach that was suggested in the Committee on Disarmament by the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hans van den Broek, on 29 March this year.

Far be it from us to underestimate the complexity of the verification aspects. We recognize, for example, that there are no quick fixes to the problem of residual capacities, should specific anti-satellite systems be banned. Collateral measures could perhaps reduce this problem. Yet the view seems to be widely held that, within the scope of the measures we propose, verification may be difficult but not impossible.

I stress again that in the field of arms control in outer space, as in other areas of disarmament, absolute verification is impossible. Protective measures to enhance the self-defence capabilities of satellites - at least the most vital - may therefore be found to be indispensable. A parallel appears to emerge with the prospective chemical weapons ban: an acceptable verification picture from a security point of view could consist of a combination of a set of verification measures adequately tailored to the scope of the agreement, a certain level of protection and, possibly, collateral measures. In addition, States should keep the residual-capacities problem manageable.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

The Netherlands Government has taken note with interest of the draft treaty on the prohibition of the use of force in outer space and from space against the earth, recently submitted by the Soviet Union, and we shall come back to this draft at a later stage.

I now turn to the subject of chemical weapons. At the outset, I wish to recall that the Netherlands armed forces do not possess chemical weapons, that the Netherlands Government does not consider introducing these weapons into its armed forces and that it rejects the stockpiling of chemical weapons on Netherlands territory. This position reflects our view that stability does not seem to depend to a meaningful degree on chemical weapons capabilities. It is therefore disappointing that, intensive negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament notwithstanding, a decisive breakthrough in favour of the speedy conclusion of a chemical-weapons ban has not yet been achieved, though small steps were made that broke the ground towards narrowing down some existing differences.

An important contribution to the work of the Committee on Disarmament saw the light in the form of an elaborate model for the destruction of chemical weapons, presented by the United States delegation. We hope that countries holding strong views on different concepts for the destruction of chemical weapons and the verification thereof will present them without further delay, so as to stimulate a dialectic process. An opportunity for a detailed exchange of views will be offered a few weeks from now at Tooele Army Depot, Utah, where the United States has invited all interested delegations to attend an on-site demonstration of the United States destruction-model. We hope that this important initiative will contribute to a breakthrough in the negotiations, with a positive spill-over effect to other areas of the much-desired convention. Thanks to the efforts of the Canadian chairmanship, presiding in a most stimulating manner over the chemical-weapons negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament, a rough draft of such a convention is now on the table. All members of the Committee on Disarmament should now make a concentrated effort to formulate precisely their respective treaty concepts, with a view to resolving remaining differences so that a full draft convention can be presented to the General Assembly in the near future. The urgency of this task is highlighted by continuing reports on the use of chemical weapons against defenceless peoples in developing countries.

(Mr. van Dongen, Netherlands)

Mr. Chairman, I conclude - none too early, you may think. But the weight and the complexity of the issues at stake did not allow for casual treatment. Even less do they justify efforts to pretend that they can be solved by the use of slogans, however appealing these may sound. All States, great and small, must bear their share of the responsibility to keep the peace and our world livable. The Netherlands nation is deeply conscious of that duty. Where I have stressed the need for stability as well as for realism in the field of arms control and disarmament, I have done so to indicate our approach to the problems. The Netherlands will try to live up to its reputation and will do its bit, soberly, reasonably and tenaciously.

Mr. ADELMAN (United States): It is a real pleasure to be here today.

Looking around this chamber, as I have, I see many colleagues with whom I have enjoyed immensely working in the past, over the past two years. It is a good feeling to come back to such familiar ground, especially as in my new position I look back to my United Nations days in general and to the First Committee meetings in particular with a special fondness. I am especially pleased that a dear personal friend, Ambassador Tom Vraalsen, has assumed the chairmanship of this important Committee.

The First Committee is, as we all know, confronted with many critical security and arms control issues. Resolving those issues is the major challenge of our times if we are to help make the world a safer place for succeeding generations in the place that we inherited from previous generations. Our task is nothing short of doing everything in our power to ensure that all people may realize their potential in a world that offers them security and freedom.

Last year in this same forum, my predecessor and my friend, Gene Rostow, called for a change in the climate of world opinion. He appealed for a demonstration of universal goodwill, for the exercise of the powers of reason and for all nations to heed the words and to follow the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

I wish that I could tell Gene Rostow today, and that I could tell everybody in this chamber today, that all nations had heeded those calls. But I cannot. The continuing troubles in the Middle East have been of grave concern to my Government and to the Governments of many other representatives sitting in this room. We see continuing aggression in Afghanistan and wars in the Near East, South-East Asia and Africa. We see attempts to foster conflict in Central America, in particular to destabilize the duly-elected Government in El Salvador. The Korean airliner tragedy underlines the different standards that exist and that run counter to what is right for the family of nations.

My purpose here is not to belabour the troubles which separate this body, but to try to focus on a better future. The United States is dedicated to that goal. When President Reagan stood before the General Assembly just a few weeks ago on 26 September he reaffirmed the United States Government's commitment, and his personal commitment, to reducing nuclear arms. He made an unequivocal pledge to those gathered in the General Assembly, saying that:

"The United States seeks and will accept any equitable, verifiable agreement that stabilizes forces at lower levels than currently exist. We are ready to be flexible in our approach - indeed, willing to compromise."

(A/38/PV.5, p. 7)

I take this opportunity to reinforce that pledge made by President Reagan.

The United States is embarked on one of the most ambitious arms control agendas ever. That fact often is insufficiently understood and is sometimes, if not often, misrepresented.

Our goal is, pure and simple, to enhance stability by significant nuclear arms reductions. In the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) we have repeatedly demonstrated flexibility on key issues which divide the two sides. During last summer's round we proposed a draft treaty that addressed several of the concerns voiced by the Soviet Union. Our draft treaty provides a basis on which an agreement that serves the interests of all can be found.

During the current round we are continuing to press for progress. As President Reagan recently announced, the United States delegation will propose a mutual guaranteed build-down of ballistic missile warheads and a build-down of bombers, all designed to encourage stabilizing systems. The United States is willing to negotiate trade-offs between United States advantages and Soviet advantages in ways that will move towards a more stable balance of forces.

In the START negotiations our basic objectives remain unchanged. We seek a safer, more stable strategic balance at force levels much lower than those which exist today. We seek in particular to remove any incentives on either side to launch a first strike. For our part, we cannot be satisfied with merely capping the nuclear arms race at the current, very high, levels.

We have seen some movement in the negotiations, but not nearly as much as we had hoped. So far, the Soviet Union has failed to respond to our initiatives in a manner that would permit significant progress.

In these negotiations our primary focus has, of course, been on weapons systems. But we also recognize that other measures can help promote stability and reduce the risk of war. With this in mind the United States has proposed confidence-building measures in START calling for the pre-notification of ballistic missile launches and major military exercises. We have proposed specific means of improving

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

communications between the two Governments in a crisis. These initiatives are designed to strengthen barriers against the outbreak of war through accident or miscalculation.

The unprecedented and relentless Soviet buildup of triple-warhead SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles - these are the SS-20s that were explained so well by Ambassador van Dongen in his statement this morning - threatens our allies in Europe and in Asia and heightens tensions around the globe. Faced with this problem, the United States and its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have been seeking a negotiated solution to achieve a balance in such longer-range intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF).

To achieve that balance, the United States initially proposed the elimination of this entire category of nuclear weapons on both sides. In short, we undertook to cancel all planned deployments and production of such missiles if the Soviet Union would eliminate its existing SS-20, SS-4 and SS-5 missiles and agree not to produce any more such missiles. We continue to see this as the best solution for Americans, for Europeans, for Asians, and for the Soviet people. It is also the very best - to be parochial about my interests - for arms control itself.

The Soviet Union has been unwilling to accept this far-reaching approach to security and stability. I think it is fair to say that the only thing that anybody has seen wrong with the zero option is that the Soviets have refused to accept it. Therefore, to try to move these negotiations forward, the United States, in close consultation with its allies, put forward a proposal earlier this year for an interim agreement that would result in substantially reduced, equal levels of United States and Soviet warheads on a global basis. More recently, President Reagan proposed other steps to try to meet stated Soviet concerns.

As representatives here realize, he expressed, first, a willingness to consider in the context of equal global limits a commitment not to offset the entire Soviet global longer-range INF missile deployment through United States deployments in Europe. We would, of course, retain the right to deploy such missiles elsewhere within the global ceiling.

The President expressed, secondly, a willingness to consider proposals involving aircraft that are consistent with our criteria for an agreement. The President expressed, thirdly, in the context of significant reductions to equal levels, his willingness to apportion the reduction of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in an appropriate manner.

Quite clearly our hope is that this further demonstration of our flexibility will lead to agreement in Geneva. The Soviet Union, however, has refused to negotiate on the basis of equality. Instead, the only basis on which they have said they would negotiate is what amounts to what the President called at the United Nations a "half-zero" option, that is, zero deployments for our side and substantial deployments for their side. They want in effect to perpetuate a complete Soviet monopoly in these missiles, with all the threats to free peoples and to stability that this monopoly implies.

In both the strategic and intermediate-range nuclear arms control negotiations we look to the Soviet Union to reciprocate the flexible and constructive approach taken by the United States. With such co-operation from the Soviet side we could report substantial progress in these vital efforts at next year's Assembly, unlike this year's Assembly, where, unfortunately, we cannot announce such progress.

While we push ahead to reduce existing nuclear arsenals, we must also continue vigorous efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons. Few principles have been more widely accepted in these halls than the fact that nuclear-weapon proliferation constitutes a grave threat to international stability and to the security of all nations. We can be encouraged by the progress we have made working closely together. The number of countries that have opted for nuclear weapons is much smaller than many feared or predicted earlier. I am reminded that in the early 1960s President John F. Kennedy said that there was a prospect of some 25 or even, I believe, 30 nuclear-weapon States in the early 1980s, and because of efforts that we have bolstered and summoned on this issue we are not in the situation that President Kennedy feared over 20 years ago.

But we cannot become complacent about this consensus or rest on our record. Preventing Proliferation requires continued dedication, constant vigilance, fresh initiatives and steadfast support for the barriers to proliferation that now exist.

The third conference to review the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to be held in 1985, affords all parties the opportunity to renew their commitment to the Treaty. As we start planning the conference -- which we in the United States Government are helping to do -- it is my hope that we can encourage all States which have not yet adhered to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to do so. Let us also work together to reaffirm and strengthen the vital function this Treaty serves in support of the peace and security of all States.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

We are, of course, actively engaged in a number of other arms control endeavours. One of the most important - and one which was discussed earlier by our colleague from the Netherlands - is the effort to rid the world of chemical weapons. To this end the United States is working with other members of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, where our representative is Ambassador Lou Fields, to elaborate a convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on the destruction of existing stockpiles.

As evidence of the importance we place on this, Vice President Bush launched a major United States initiative at the Committee on Disarmament last February to accelerate the negotiations being undertaken by Ambassador Fields. At that time we introduced a comprehensive document detailing our views on the contents of a chemical weapons ban. Then in July Ambassador Fields shared with the Committee our work on illustrative procedures for destroying chemical weapons and for verifying that procedure.

To give those involved in the negotiations a better insight into the problems involved, and a better personal feel for the issues we are dealing with in the Committee on Disarmament, we have now invited the member and observer delegations to that Committee to attend a workshop in mid-November at the chemical weapons destruction facility at Tooele Army Depot in Utah. That workshop will demonstrate the United States programme for chemical weapons destruction. We hope that this workshop will stimulate further discussion and progress on means of verifying a comprehensive chemical weapons ban.

As we pursue such arms control measures, we must not close our eyes to the environment in which we are working or to actions that go against and can undermine what we are seeking to accomplish. President Reagan's recent address noted areas in which we have serious concerns about Soviet compliance with agreements already negotiated - agreements the Soviet Union has itself agreed to. It is particularly tragic that the use of chemical warfare in Asia - about which this Committee has heard a great deal from me personally over the last two years - continues today, in violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the 1972 biological and toxin weapons Convention, customary international law, and our sense of human decency - I think everybody's sense of human decency.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

We cannot turn our back on this tragic situation. If we are serious about arms control, then we are serious about compliance issues and we must continue to call attention to problems of compliance so long as they exist. In the chemical weapons area we should actively support efforts to investigate evidence of their use. We look forward to the recommendations of the experts on means to deal with the matter pending completion of a new chemical weapons treaty. Their recommendations will be given very careful attention.

We should also rededicate efforts in the Committee on Disarmament to banning a whole class of radiological weapons before they are ever produced. Given the political will it should be possible, in our view, to reach agreement soon on a consolidated treaty text to outlaw such weapons. We and others in the Committee recognize that, compared with more compelling priorities, a radiological weapons treaty may be viewed as a modest accomplishment. But even modest accomplishments can have value and can help move us further along in our critical work.

The arms control agenda does not end with START, INF and the Committee on Disarmament. The United States and its allies in Western Europe, for example, have taken initiatives to seek reductions in conventional forces in Europe. The East has recently shown some willingness in principle to consider a more realistic framework for monitoring such reductions. We hope that concrete progress is possible. The Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe is getting under way to work out agreements to reduce the risk of war arising through error or miscalculation. The United States, with its allies, will be taking a positive approach to this important undertaking.

The United States is, as well, reviewing other possible areas for significant arms control measures. We continue, for example, to seek ways effectively to verify nuclear testing limitations. We are also reviewing possible ways of reducing the risks of conflict in space.

The simple fact is that arms control is one of the most intellectually challenging, emotionally gripping and profoundly important endeavours of our era. Working together we have come a fair distance in only two decades. The limited test ban Treaty, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America - the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the biological and toxin weapons Convention, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the SALT I Treaty, and the outer

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

space and sea-bed Treaties have all been successfully concluded. I believe they serve, to varying degrees, as critical cornerstones in channelling and curtailing weapons programmes and thereby leading to greater stability.

Our work is far from finished, however, and future progress is likely to present even more challenges. The key issues we face today are extremely complicated, technically, politically and militarily. There are no simple solutions. Sweeping and unverifiable declarations of intent must not be confused with effective arms control.

Reaching agreements that actually strengthen security and promote peace may well prove much more difficult and time-consuming now than they have in the past. The task is also ever more compelling.

As we seek to reduce the threat of war it is useful to remind ourselves of some very key principles. These are principles of arms control and of security in a larger sense.

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

First, arms control agreements and the process of negotiating them are not ends in themselves. They are a means to enhance stability, security and understanding between nations and thereby to reduce tension and conflict. Accomplishing those objectives requires agreements that are equitable, verifiable and militarily significant.

We cannot and must not sacrifice progress for the sake of perfection. At the same time, we must not be lured by agreements which might appear appealing but, on reflection, do not really serve the goals for which they are intended. Empty agreements would be easy. But agreements that inflate expectations without much in the way of concrete benefit would not, on balance, serve our interest.

Secondly, just as effective arms control does not come easily, it also takes considerable time and patience. Negotiation of the NPT, for example, took more than five years. Other agreements required even more time. There is no quick and easy route. I am often reminded that the Austrian State Agreement took over 10 years of negotiations. We might not have a free, democratic, neutral and independent Austria today, without the presence of Soviet troops, had the West compromised its principles and objectives at any point in that 10 year span.

A third principle is that the attempts of the United States and its allies to maintain an effective deterrent and military balance are essential for stability in the world and as an incentive for the arms control process really to work. In this light, the Reagan Administration has pursued programmes to strengthen defences and redress the imbalances that have come about over the past decade. These are the imbalances that I have described in detail to this Committee over the past two years. These programmes provide strong incentives for the Soviet Union to negotiate with us for genuine arms reductions.

Effective deterrence and effective arms control have both become more difficult to achieve quite simply because of Soviet conduct and Soviet weapons build-up over the past decade. Since 1972 the Soviet Union's nuclear weapons have increased threefold. It has dedicated an estimated 12 per cent to 14 per cent of its gross national product to defence. This compares with less than 8 per cent for the United States. Moreover, while the West has unilaterally retired over 1,000 nuclear warheads in Europe since 1979, the Soviets have steadily increased theirs. By word and deed, the Soviets have shown that they regard

(Mr. Adelman, United States)

military power and the correlation of forces, as they call it, including nuclear forces, as the foundation for projecting their power and influence around the world.

The United States has no interest in an "arms race" with the Soviet Union. The "arms race" of course, has been discussed a great deal in this room over the last two years. President Reagan has made it clear that we seek only to restore a stable military balance and to do what is necessary to assure deterrence and reduce the risk of war.

The fact is that the number of weapons in the United States nuclear stockpile is now at its lowest level in 20 years. Despite all the talk that takes place in parts of the United Nations about the relentless ever-increasing arms race on both sides, I repeat that the number of weapons in the United States nuclear stockpile is today at its lowest level in 20 years. Since the mid-1960s, the nuclear stockpile quantity has declined considerably. The number of nuclear weapons in our total inventory was one third higher in 1967 than it is today. In more graphic terms, the United States today deploys some 3,000 fewer nuclear weapons than it deployed in the late 1960s. The total megatonnage of our nuclear weapons today is one fourth -- that is, 75 per cent less than what it was in 1960. Statistics of that kind defy the rhetoric about the ever-increasing arms race and are to the credit of the American side. The goal of our programmes and arms control policies, as I outlined at the beginning, is to reduce nuclear arms even further, and in an equal manner as between the United States and the Soviet Union, in a way that will increase stability.

A fourth general principle is that arms control cannot be divorced from the broader context of the international climate. President Johnson's plans for a Moscow visit to launch SALT I and the whole SALT process were dashed by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1968. The Carter Administration's approach to SALT II was very deeply affected, as everyone knows, by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The United States and other policy makers on the world stage should not -- and the United States and the Reagan Administration will not -- unnecessarily link or burden arms control efforts by tying them to other facts of Soviet behaviour and conduct in various parts of the world. At the same time, we in democratic societies with freely elected representatives of the people cannot ignore that those realities can, and at times will inevitably, have an impact on the climate for our arms control efforts.

The final principle is that success in arms control requires sustained political will and purpose. Only by our being steadfast will success be at all possible.

It is important to recognize that, in the long run, success will hinge on the ability of the political leadership in free societies to inform and to build consensus on arms control issues. Our deepest values and our democratic principles demand this. Discussion, debate and dissent form the very fibres of free societies and are key signs of our strength. Regrettably, those voices for real peace and against war, for human rights and against tyranny, for effective arms reductions and against arms build-up are stifled in closed societies. As reflected in last year's relevant United Nations resolution, which was adopted unanimously, those voices should now be allowed to be heard. The United States delegation will have more to say later on this issue to build upon the work of the First Committee on a consensus basis last year.

We are on a long and difficult road on which every nation has an important responsibility. We recognize that the nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility for nuclear disarmament, but no State can escape some responsibility for the arms control issues that confront us today. Since 1945 we have witnessed over 150 conventional wars or guerrilla actions, which have killed over 10 million people -- staggering statistics.

The continuing struggle for peace is in many respects indivisible. Like my predecessor, Eugene Rostow, I hope for a brighter tomorrow. I believe it is possible. It is not easy, but it is possible. It will require that we all admit the existence of the problems we confront. They cannot be resolved if they are denied.

The continuing struggle for peace is not a casual undertaking. It is deadly serious and it is everybody's business. If all States in this Assembly involve themselves constructively there will be a real prospect for a brighter tomorrow.

Mr. IJEWERE (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation is happy to see Ambassador Vraalsen presiding over the affairs of the First Committee during the current session of the United Nations General Assembly. As a worthy representative of Norway, a country with which Nigeria enjoys excellent relations, he can rest assured that my delegation will extend to him its full co-operation in the discharge of his responsibilities. My delegation would like to place it on record, with appreciation, that he has undertaken intensive and extensive consultations both here and in Geneva in order to facilitate the work of our Committee. It is our hope that his efforts will bear fruitful results. We also avail ourselves of this opportunity to convey to the other officers of the Committee our felicitations and best wishes.

The arms race, particularly in its nuclear aspects, ominously threatens the very survival of the human race. The prospects of a civilization being led dangerously and inexorably on the road to self-extinction provide us with the motive force, a reasoning and a rationality for the development of options which open to us the possibility and the prospects of effecting a change in the postures of States, which by investing so heavily in the arms race seem bent on hastening the process of human destruction. We are convinced, however, that neither these major proponents of the arms race nor any State, for that matter, would rationally wish death and destruction to the human race of which they themselves form a part.

The United Nations must seek to re-establish its moral authority and relevance in the solution of problems confronting it, particularly in relation to halting and reversing the arms race, thereby ensuring the continued survival of our civilization.

In contributing to the debate on the related issues of international peace and security, disarmament and development, the delegation of Nigeria retains as its basic premise the conviction that although disarmament is complex and sensitive because of the security perception of States, which is built upon the quantity and quality of their military efforts and capability, it is still considered possible and indeed feasible to achieve disarmament given the political will of States to negotiate in good faith.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

It can no longer be regarded as a figment of the imagination to suggest that the most urgent task facing humanity today is the prevention of nuclear war. Dangerous doctrines of limited winnable or survivable nuclear war, or of flexible response, not only have lowered the nuclear threshold but have made the outbreak of nuclear war a threatening reality. In this regard, my delegation noted with considerable interest the views regarding nuclear war expressed by President Reagan when he addressed the General Assembly on 27 September 1983. On that occasion he said:

"A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. I believe that if Governments are determined to deter and prevent war, there will not be war. Nothing is more in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations Charter than arms control". (A/38/PV.5, p. 3)

In that statement we see the President endorsing some of the views held by a great majority of the international community concerning disarmament negotiations. The first concerns the need to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear war, which, as the President himself has admitted, cannot be won. The second concerns the important role played by political will in disarmament negotiations.

Nuclear weapons are more than weapons of war: they are weapons of mass annihilation. While it is legitimate and proper that States should seek to provide, as a first duty, for their security, it is obvious to all that the current level of sophistication of weaponry available to States is out of tune with their defence and security requirements. And, what is more, the frenzied pursuit of a weapons option as the sole instrument for conflict resolution not only exacerbates international tension but destroys mutual trust and confidence among States and runs counter to the basic provisions of the United Nations Charter, to which we have all willingly subscribed as representing, in a general sense, the collective conscience of the international community.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

While there is a shared responsibility to halt and reverse the arms race in the interest of human survival, civilization and progressive development we cannot gloss over the unacceptable situation in which global security has been held hostage to the security interests of a handful of States. In this regard, the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States, which bear special responsibility for the arms race, should also accept the primary duty and obligation to achieve substantial reductions in their military arsenals as a first step towards general and complete disarmament. For when it becomes possible, and indeed fashionable, for States to talk of developing and pursuing global strategies, of creating spheres of influence, of ministering to self-imposed worldwide responsibilities, of being specialists in crisis management - the embers of which crisis they created and fanned in the first place - it is clear that the very basis of constructing the peace process is undermined.

It is also clear that no people or groups of people, irrespective of their level of development or political consciousness, can subject themselves or allow themselves to be subjected to perpetual domination. It is therefore not only extremely dangerous but, equally, untenable for any State or group of States to wish to impose its values on any other State or group of States. Such a situation provides fertile grounds for friction, tension and revolt.

This quest for domination has unfortunately manifested itself in various forms. The pattern of economic relations between the North and the South demonstrates the willingness of the former to perpetuate its domination over the latter through the adoption of appropriate policies and an unwillingness to contribute to the achievement of an international economic system based on equity and justice.

There is no doubt but that the control of nuclear weapons is the key to the possibility of peace. That is why all efforts must be geared towards the eventual elimination of these weapons in particular and the prevention of nuclear war in general. In this context, we must reiterate our conviction that modalities such as the acceptance of a nuclear

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freeze, which would imply both a quantitative and a qualitative freeze on nuclear weapons, systems of such weapons and their means of delivery at current levels, a moratorium on weapons testing in all environments by all the nuclear-weapon States, a cut-off in the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and a gradual but substantial reduction in existing stockpiles, and so forth - all these retain the possibility of the achievement of nuclear disarmament over a period of time.

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

Of particular importance is the necessity of elaborating, with a minimum delay, a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty as part of the far-reaching objective of curtailing the nuclear arms race and achieving nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately the Committee on Disarmament, which has been seized of this question, has thus far failed to make any progress. We note with concern that it has not been possible for all the nuclear-weapon States to participate in the Ad-Hoc Working Group on a Nuclear Test Ban established by the Committee. We cannot envisage the conclusion of a nuclear test ban that fails to win the concurrence and commitment of all the nuclear-weapon States. In other words, in order for an effective nuclear test ban to be achieved it must be comprehensive and verifiable, and it must elicit a commitment of absolute compliance by all the nuclear-weapon States in particular and by all other States in general. In the circumstances it is our hope that the two remaining nuclear-weapon States will reconsider their position and, in the interest of the common good, agree to join forces with the other three in the elaboration, within the single multilateral forum of the Committee on Disarmament, of a binding nuclear test-ban treaty.

Although some useful work has been done in the Committee on Disarmament on the question of defining the issues relating to verification and compliance with a view to making progress towards a nuclear test ban, the point must continue to be made that the central issue of concluding a nuclear test ban must not be sidetracked in a haze of technical ancillary questions. A nuclear test ban involves both a political decision and a technical consideration. The political decision, which must in the international interest be taken right away, is to request the Committee on Disarmament to proceed without further delay to the elaboration of a nuclear test-ban treaty on the basis of an appropriate mandate.

Of equal importance is the need to conclude as soon as possible a convention aimed at the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons. My

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delegation believes that such a ban should envisage a commitment to the non-production of chemical weapons, chemical agents and their precursors as well as the destruction of existing stockpiles of such weapons and agents.

While the integrity and contribution of the chemical industry to the processes of development of countries should be encouraged rather than jeopardized, it is the view of my delegation that a general-purpose criterion, rather than a selective prohibition of chemical substances, stands a better chance of plugging the loopholes which would permit the diversion of such substances from peaceful to military uses on the part of a country that so decides.

Pending the elaboration of a convention prohibiting chemical weapons it is highly desirable that States which already possess such weapons or intend to manufacture, deploy or stockpile them on the basis of the technology and facilities available to them exercise the maximum self-restraint, including a moratorium on such manufacturing, deployment or stockpiling.

In this connection we cannot fail to note with concern the recent decision by one nuclear-weapon State to proceed with the production of a new generation of chemical weapons. At the same time we must not gloss over the reported cases of the use of chemical weapons in combat situations by certain States in certain regions of the world in contravention of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We must here reiterate our position of principle that when such allegations are made international efforts must be exerted to establish the truth of the matter beyond all reasonable doubt, both as a means of establishing mutual trust and restoring confidence among States and as a means of ensuring that the provisions of the relevant international instrument are being faithfully observed.

We note with interest that the Committee on Disarmament has continued its consideration of the elaboration of a convention on the prohibition of radiological weapons which, as of now, are said not to exist as a weapons system, but which can readily be developed and deployed at short notice on the basis of existing technology. Such a convention has validity and relevance in so far as

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it prevents the addition of another weapons system to an existing awesome stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. We believe, however, that the question of the prohibition of attacks against nuclear facilities should form an integral part of such a convention, in particular because the radiological consequences of such attacks can be as destructive as those of a nuclear explosion and also in view of the necessity of protecting nuclear facilities as a contribution to the development efforts of States.

A natural concomitant to real progress in the field of nuclear disarmament will be a sustained effort to achieve significant reductions in conventional armaments and armed forces. In other words, progress in nuclear disarmament could create an atmosphere conducive to approaching conventional disarmament. It is therefore not productive to wish to accord parity of status to both aspects of the arms race.

Such an understanding must not be taken to imply a diminution of impact of the conventional arms race on the socio-economic experiences of States. Rather, it seeks to emphasize the need to achieve conventional disarmament on a global basis and on the understanding that the security of no State will, as a consequence, be either jeopardized or diminished or its sovereignty undermined.

The extension of the arms race into outer space must be seen not only as a dangerous phenomenon but also as a disturbing one. For while it was once possible for us, in our collective psyche, to think of outer space as representing a haven, with connotations of unlimited expanse and freedom, it is now clear that the development and deployment of various forms of satellite with military orientations by a handful of States has made that conception of outer space obsolete. As though the intractable dilemma which the current arms race on land, on the high seas and in the ocean depths creates were not enough, those nations have sought to make the entire human environment a theatre of war. They must be told that enough is enough. The prospect of a war conducted from outer space must be seen as not only an invasion of man's last frontier; it

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should also send chills down the spines of all men of good conscience. In this connection, it is pertinent to recall that the extension of the arms race into outer space, with its deleterious consequences on the human environment and on ecology, runs counter to the spirit of the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

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Events in the recent past have shown that the extension of the arms race into outer space poses a real threat to international peace and security. For instance, the development of a space-based anti-satellite defence system has introduced a new dimension into space warfare prospects. Furthermore, the increase in the use of anti-satellite weapons, high-energy lasers and particle-beam weapons certainly negates the spirit of the 1967 Treaty and other pertinent legal instruments whose objective is to promote the exploration and use of outer space solely for peaceful purposes. My delegation believes that it is incumbent on the General Assembly to re-emphasize international concern on the subject, underscore the urgency of the situation and prevail on the Committee on Disarmament to undertake expeditiously substantive negotiations on the question with a view to reaching an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, in order to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The current reality is that the non-nuclear-weapon States are constantly being reminded that unless they play ball in line with the wishes of the nuclear-weapon States their very security cannot be assured. It is in recognition of this reality that the non-nuclear-weapon States have sought, in vain thus far, to assure themselves and, at the same time, be assured in an instrument of legally binding character that they will not be victims of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. And yet the majority of these States, by agreeing to become parties to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty, have forsworn the nuclear weapons option. And what is more, the nuclear-weapon States, in response to these legitimate demands of the non-nuclear-weapon States, have made unilateral declarations with conditional guarantees. must submit that the conditionality attaching to some of these declarations robs them of their content, value and applicability. In the circumstances, we demand that, as a minimum and as an earnest of their good intention and commitment not to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, the nuclear-weapon States should agree unconditionally to conclude a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances, with the minimum of delay, within the multilateral forum of the Committee on Disarmament.

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Within this perspective, my delegation wishes to draw attention once again to the threat posed to the security of the African continent by South Africa's nuclear-weapon capability. Nuclear weapons in the hands of a racist minority régime constitute an instrument of blackmail, oppression and repression. Besides, in the case of South Africa that capability has also been used for aggressive purposes against neighbouring African States. Africa's commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free continent remains valid and is consistent with its determination to pursue development in peace. Thus every effort or action aimed at destabilizing the continent or frustrating the achievement of the objective of a denuclearized Africa is not only an unfriendly act but also one that has to be resisted, either individually or collectively, as appropriate. We call once again on those Member countries which have willingly given solace, support and co-operation to South Africa in its development of this capability to change course and rethink their options, in the interest of international peace and security.

Having regard to the present state of play in the bipolar military situation, the singular lack of progress in disarmament talks, the demonstrable unwillingness on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to undertake meaningful disarmament measures and the very defensive postures of Governments in relation to their military effort and capability, it seems to my delegation that the only visible option, which should be further explored in the present circumstances, is the mobilization of world public opinion in favour of disarmament. World public opinion enlightened as to the evils of the arms race, especially its destabilizing character and its capacity to distort the socio-economic options and priorities of States, will, it is believed, prompt Governments to take the right decisions in favour of disarmament. Such mobilization within the context of the World Disarmament Campaign, which was solemnly launched during the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1982, should have as its objective to inform, educate and provide a forum for the free exchange of views in all objectivity and in all the regions of the world. In the view of my delegation, it is extremely important that such mobilization of world public opinion should not be muzzled but encouraged to result in productive consciousness.

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As part of the mobilization of world public opinion, the United Nations fellowship programme on disarmament should continue to provide education and training in disarmament as an investment in human development.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which has since come to represent a blueprint and a frame of reference in the collective effort towards disarmament, must be seen as a bold and imaginative first step on the tedious road to general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The expectation was that, drawing inspiration from its various provisions, in particular its Programme of Action, Member States would find themselves disposed to undertake constructive debates and negotiations leading to the adoption of concrete disarmament measures. This has of course not been the case and, although the validity of the Final Document was reconfirmed by consensus during the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the attitude of some States in subsequent disarmament talks has been to seek to call into question the continuing validity of the Final Document. This is regrettable.

As a further effort to move out of the seeming impasse, the comprehensive programme of disarmament was conceived as a novel but unified perspective, with modest steps in disarmament, taking account of the various sensitivities - individual, bilateral and multilateral, and regional as well as global - within a realistic target date. It was the expectation that the Committee on Disarmament, to which the programme had been submitted for negotiation, would be able to submit to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1982, an agreed text for adoption. This proved impossible. The hope was, therefore, that the Committee on Disarmament would submit a renegotiated text for adoption during the thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Committee on Disarmament has now been able to present a modified text of the comprehensive programme of disarmament. We wish to express our gratitude to the States members of the Committee for their efforts in that endeavour, and most especially to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, the

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indefatigable and highly motivated Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico for having undertaken an almost impossible task. He certainly deserves our commendation, given the attitude of inflexibility on the part of the nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States.

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It has become increasingly clear that any multilateral effort at developing a common perspective in the fight against the arms race and its very dangerous consequences has to pander, first of all, to the moods and sensitivities of the two super-Powers, and by extension to those of the other nuclear-weapon States and other militarily significant States. That is why we think that the state of play in the bilateral relations between the two super-Powers has a profound impact on the progress, or lack of it, in all disarmament talks. In this connection we have been noting with increasing concern the unfolding, in paltry and hesitant spurts, of the bilateral United States-Soviet Union talks on medium-range nuclear weapons and of the strategic arms limitation talks which have been going on intermittently in Geneva. We should like to suggest to the two countries that those talks and the interests and concerns of the rest of the world really cannot be mutually exclusive. Those countries have a responsibility to the world to reduce tension in their bilateral relations and to achieve substantial progress in disarmament. They must not renege on that duty.

Before concluding, I should like to make a few comments on organizational matters which by their very import have far-reaching implications for the ability of the United Nations to fulfil its central role in the field of disarmament negotiations. My delegation has noted with interest, and indeed with satisfaction, the recent decision to upgrade, and the subsequent upgrading of, the Centre for Disarmament into a full-fledged department, the Department for Disarmament Affairs. That decision was taken in full recognition of the enhanced role which has been envisaged for the Department in view of the growing complexity of disarmament efforts and the necessity for the Department for Disarmament Affairs to service adequately the various conferences, meetings and consultations under United Nations auspices which bear directly on disarmament. We look forward to receiving during the current session of the General Assembly a status report on how far and in what manner the change has been implemented.

Secondly, by a resolution of the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the Committee on Disarmament was requested to consider redesignating itself as the Conference on Disarmament. From that Committee's report to the current session of the General Assembly it is clear that it has considered the request on its merits and has agreed to redesignate itself as the Conference on Disarmament. We laud

that decision and express the hope that the enhanced status of the Conference on Disarmament will entail a consequent commitment on the part of its members to fruitful debate and to the preparation of binding international instruments leading to general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Mr. HARON (Malaysia): The quest for security in an insecure world is a perpetual driving force that moves men and nations. So irresistible is this driving force that men are apt to lose sight of the essential paradox of security: that while it is often perceived and understood in terms of an absolute, it can realistically be achieved only in relative measure. In chasing the illusion of absolute security they only feed the insecurity of their environment, heightening in turn their own sense of insecurity.

To the big and powerful of this earth, the temptation to see security in absolute terms - to see their security as being exclusive of the security or insecurity of others - can be quite overwhelming. There is much impatience with the importunate insistence of the less fortunate that the security of the powerful and the security of the others, far from being mutually exclusive, are in fact mutually strengthening. Nor is this delusion of absolutism much helped by the tendency of the small and the weak themselves to regard overall security as being directly and solely related to the state of play between the big and the powerful, and not as the sum total of their own separate prospects.

Almost 40 years ago came the end of the Second World War, which was supposed to end all wars. Out of the ashes of Hiroshima came the chilling realization that a third world war would entirely obliterate existing human civilization. The nuclear terror provided a most powerful inducement for the nuclear Powers not to stumble into direct war, but it did not prevent them from grafting their rivalries on to internal and regional conflicts of every conceivable kind in regions deemed to be of strategic importance to them. Subsequent autonomous developments over time in key areas, especially in the European theatre, fired not least by the fears of their peoples and Governments of a possible nuclear disaster, helped for a time to force self-restraint upon the super-Powers, ushering in a brief flirtation with the politics of détente. Both super-Powers were practically dragged along, moving step by painful step to reaching agreements on European security through summit conferences, the Helsinki agreement, and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).

(Mr. Haron, Malaysia)

But the sense of relative security that prevailed in Europe could not, unfortunately, be extended to areas not considered to be strategically vital, and therefore seen as being up for grabs: the third world. The notion of symmetry of power conceded by one Power was not, it seemed, sufficient incentive for the other to pass up the opportunities available in the internationalist duty of assisting societies and States in supposed revolutionary transformation. Assistance was almost always characterized by generous inflows of conventional armaments. The result, invariably, was the spectacle of rival countries and rival groups within countries battling each other with foreign-made and foreign-supplied weapons at the expense of their social, economic and political advancement. Assymetry of expectations between the super-Powers with regard to the third world saw détente degenerate into disillusionment and mutual recrimination; the gains of the period, modest as they were, quickly eroded. Although since Hiroshima men have said that a nuclear war is unwinnable and therefore unthinkable, today the super-Powers are again poised to introduce newer, more lethal weapons systems, as if such a war were now thinkable, and therefore winnable. Will all these developments end in frenetic lunacy?

As we meet during this thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, we cannot but be singularly conscious that we are meeting under changed and changing circumstances. We cannot draw much comfort from developments on the international scene. The brief flowering of détente in the early 1970s has withered in the chill of super-Power relations in the early 1980s, as fundamental rivalries and antagonisms and competition for spheres of influence reassert themselves.

In view of this gloomy trend, my delegation would like to underscore the need to urge the super-Powers to resume their search for détente in an earnest, realistic and comprehensive manner which would safeguard international security everywhere. The task of establishing a new détente will have to be approached not only on the level of disarmament, nuclear and conventional, but also on the level of political understanding and accommodation. There is an urgent need for both parties to come to an agreed, well-defined perception of a code of behaviour in their relations with the countries of the third world. Had this issue been resolved by the super-Powers in the basic principles of relations of 1972, SALT II might well have paved

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a path guiding us through the dangerous minefield of the nuclear age. Admittedly, there were some serious weaknesses, but the agreed principles were workable enough to provide an opportunity for a hopeful first step on to what could have been a rung of the ladder leading to a world order free from nuclear terror.

(Mr. Haron, Malaysia)

The third world countries have in the interim steadily gained importance as factors in regional balances. Thus it is no longer adequate for the super-Powers either to interact with them as mere extensions of their respective blinkered ideological concerns or as extensions of their mutual accommodation. They, who are both the subjects and the objects of arrangements and understandings, should be equally involved in the determination of their security prospects. There must be a multilateral approach to security, if only to take cognizance of contemporary reality.

With regard to the disarmament process itself, my delegation is of the view that there are cogent arguments for the notion that no one should be starry-eyed, however well meaning, in the unilateralist belief that if only one side were to start to disarm first the other side would respond positively. We are far from being a global metropolis, with its own law makers and enforcers. Self-serving, self-righteous and indeed utterly selfish institutional, national or ideological commitments, which are the order of the day will never permit the idea of a unilateralist approach. Only a fool-proof intelligence monitoring and collection capability held equally by the parties concerned or mutual confidence and trust may incline one party to take the first step. Sadly, these elements are still absent amongst us.

The concern of the hundreds of thousands all over the world alarmed at the mad momentum of the arms race cannot however, go unheeded. Those responsible for the atomic horror both in the West and in the East owe them a moral and political obligation, just as much as they owe to their own respective civilizations, cultures and ideologies the obligation to increase the prospect for a real peace, in place of an uneasy nuclear peace based on the balance of terror.

Although realism dictates that we have to accept in the final analysis that the decision to disarm resides mainly in the hands of the big Powers, Malaysia does not believe that the rest of us should resign from our respective roles in the matter of disarmament. In our view, all countries

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should join together in the creation of conditions in which disarmament would constitute the natural order of things for the big Powers. In this regard, Malaysia, together with its partners in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), has consistently striven to make our own contribution towards world peace and security.

For us in ASEAN security has always been perceived in the sense of ensuring not merely the physical safety of our peoples against internal and external attacks but most especially their continuing political, social and economic advancement. We have fulfilled to a substantial degree the personal and national aspirations of our peoples and, in a situation somewhat analogous to that existing between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, would very much welcome peaceful coexistence with the neighbouring States of Indo-China. Unlike Europe, however, ASEAN has adopted a strategy of restraint through neutrality rather than nuclear deterrence through military alliances. The ASEAN approach seeks a denial of big Power rivalries in the region while maintaining equidistance and respecting their legitimate interests in international relations. In the context of South-East Asia, a structure of peace and stability modelled upon the European experience would be not only irrelevant but also highly dangerous. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the establishment of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in 1971 laid the basis for concerted action to free the region of South-East Asia from external Power rivalry in any form and manifestation. External Power rivalry had been the scourge afflicting regional peace and stability for more than five centuries, and it is our hope that the States of Indo-China will work with ASEAN in the context of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality to rid South-East Asia of that scourge and so inspire the growth of similar zones elsewhere.

Our deliberations in the First Committee deal essentially with the symptoms of international insecurity not its causes. It is a testimony to the seriousness of the situation, however, that we are driven to cope with so many symptoms lest they overwhelm us even before we can address the malady itself. While we work on the nuts and bolts of disarmament, we should not lose

(Mr. Haron, Malaysia)

sight of the need to attempt to trigger the survival response mechanism of the super-Powers as well. No matter how blinkered each may be by its ideological conditioning and cultural commitment, it cannot remain oblivious to cost-benefit analysis. There is no such thing now as a margin of safety, given their nuclear parity. The alternative to détente is a nuclear holocaust which will destroy not only men but also their beliefs, civilizations and ideologies. Where, indeed, is the glory, one might ask, in dying for a cause, when the cause itself dies with one?

Mr. PEREZ GUERRERO (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to offer the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee the cordial congratulations of my delegation on their election. The Chairman's country and the region to which it belongs have had a constant interest in disarmament problems, and this augurs well for the work of the Committee.

The international situation, particularly in view of the lack of specific results in disarmament negotiations, can only be described as highly disturbing. When one considers also the arms race between the great nuclear Powers, which shows signs of accelerating even further, the insecurity and instability of the world in which we live are brought sharply into focus.

Moreover, the results of the work of the deliberative and negotiating bodies of the General Assembly are discouraging. Hence the urgent need to make the United Nations and its organs a more efficient political institution, capable of strengthening the system of international security, which involves not merely disarmament aspects but also those related to economic development and social well-being, which are without doubt factors conducive to peace. International peace and security cannot be achieved without a combined effort towards disarmament and development. When we look at the picture of the world today we see how true that is.

It is not merely a matter of the number of items considered and the number of resolutions adopted. In fact the results in quantitative terms may have been in inverse ratio to the achievements in qualitative terms. The increasing number of items and resolutions has not meant real progress in the difficult task of disarmament. On the contrary while 58 resolutions were adopted at the last session

(Mr. Perez Guerrero, Venezuela)

of the General Assembly, we are confronted with a virtual standstill, in spite of the efforts of the group of countries which, like mine, are convinced, as Ambassador Garcia Robles has said, that a drop of water, falling steadily, is capable of boring through rock.

As the Secretary-General has rightly observed, it is essential that the various organs of the United Nations not be used exclusively as forums for political debate. Nothing is more pertinent in the case of the First Committee, where resolutions are adopted calling for the preparation of more reports which in turn lead to more resolutions.

(Mr. Perez Guerrero, Venezuela)

We must recognize the urgent need for us to adopt realistic approaches to disarmament, and for the decisions and resolutions that we adopt to prompt Governments to act. We endorse the words of the Secretary-General when he says in his report:

"In no area is the need for a recommitment to the principles of the Charter more important and more closely tied to the survival of humanity than in the field of disarmament and arms limitation. The prevention of nuclear war remains the unique challenge of our time, since such a war would be the ultimate negation of all human endeavour." (A/38/1, pp. 4-5)

We must, for example, see that the First Committee is not used as an instrument for certain Governments to make statements intended to win political advantages from those they regard as their adversaries in the world strategy game, statements often made solely for the purpose of convincing the public of their good intentions.

As a result of this attitude, every year this Committee has more items assigned to it and more resolutions are adopted. As pointed out in the outstanding publication on disarmament of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), those resolutions contain only appeals and solemn declarations in no way different in their content from those adopted year after year since the 1960s. Worse still, instead of resulting from a convergence of positions through negotiations or possible consensus between Member States, the resolutions signify disagreement or divergences in the approach to the major disarmament problems. There is an evident lack of political will to reach agreements or arrangements in the major tasks of disarmament.

We therefore welcome the appeal of those who have said that the first task that this Committee should concentrate on is that of an attempt to rationalize its working procedures, in order to give substance and realism to its work. This is even more urgent in view of the state of stagnation in disarmament negotiations at the present time at virtually all levels, with the exception, at least formally speaking, of aspects related to disarmament in the Final Document of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and of the convening of the forthcoming Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, to be held in Stockholm in January 1984.

(Mr. Perez Guerrero, Venezuela)

We are disturbed by the fact that the positions adopted by the two super-Powers in their bilateral negotiations in Geneva are tending to become more radical and inflexible. It seems that the prospect for a short-term agreement at the talks on intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe are fading; nor do the talks on strategic arms limitations (START), the follow-up to the SALT process, seem to stand much chance of success, especially when their slow progress is compared with the dynamic pace of technological developments. These developments permit the replacement of obsolete weapons with others, perhaps fewer but more expensive, more powerful and more efficient in dealing out death and destruction, one of the few goals which have been achieved in this tormented world - a true aberration.

There is every prospect, therefore, of a new round in the rearmament programmes of the great Powers, with better siting of weapons and new areas for the deployment of ever more sophisticated weapons, as evidenced by the already declared arms race in outer space - in other words, another phase in the East-West confrontation.

We are also disturbed by the attitude adopted by one nuclear Power towards the trilateral talks which have been taking place on a nuclear test ban, as well as the refusal of two nuclear Powers, in the multilateral negotiations in the Committee on Disarmament, to take part in the recently created Ad Hoc Working Group. Like other countries, we favour the earliest possible resumption of the trilateral talks, together with those to be held in the Committee on Disarmament. In this regard, we must draw attention to the tendency of certain Powers to try to turn the Committee on Disarmament into another deliberative forum in order to avoid any kind of genuine negotiations which could lead to specific disarmament agreements. It would almost seem that they want to avoid agreements such as that prohibiting once and for all the testing of nuclear weapons; an agreement on chemical weapons; agreements on negative guarantees; and the adoption of legally binding measures prohibiting military attacks on nuclear installations. All this could be achieved through strengthening the obligations contained in the 1949 Geneva Protocols or the adoption of another instrument, such as an additional protocol to a possible Convention on radiological weapons.

(Mr. Perez Guerrero, Venezuela)

None of the delegations here doubt the urgent need to prevent a nuclear war, because it is not only the most urgently needed measure but the one most in accord with man's rationality, unless we wish to share the pessimistic outlook of the late thinker and writer, Arthur Koestler.

It is timely to remind the nuclear Powers that they should start negotiations in a constructive spirit, in keeping with the commitment that they entered into in the preamble to the partial nuclear test ban Treaty and article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as a request has been made for the inclusion on the agenda of an item on the convening of the third review conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The logic and common sense of all Member States must make it clear to them that if the nuclear-weapon States are not genuinely prepared to negotiate verifiable and effective agreements leading to a significant quantitative and qualitative reduction in all existing nuclear-weapon systems, and those currently being developed, one cannot expect a genuine interest in undertaking a legally binding commitment not to acquire, possess or use them from States that do not possess such weapons, but might see them as a means of gaining political or military advantage.

Moreover, the door will always be open for those who at any time feel that for reasons of national security they do not wish to be bound by a commitment which seems to represent only obligations for them, without the necessary equivalent commitments by the nuclear-weapon States and those States which are in a privileged position because they have an advanced nuclear technology or the means to develop it.

(Mr. Perez Guerrero, Venezuela)

Recent events, such as the conflict in the South Atlantic, the stagnation of the negotiations in the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, and the postponement of that Conference, have highlighted the differences between the views advanced by the various groups of Member States on the concept of non-proliferation and the restrictions it implies through the classification of States into categories - that is, whether they are developing, industrialized, and/or nuclear-weapon States. This order in the scale of privileges and rights of Member States implies that the concept of non-proliferation is no longer based simply on the concept of the possession or non-possession of nuclear weapons, or other explosive devices: instead, it represents a desire or attempt to prohibit the possession, transfer or restriction of certain nuclear technologies regarded as sensitive - in other words, likely to lead to proliferation.

For similar reasons, doubt has been expressed about the viability, in the world in which we live, of what are termed nuclear-weapon-free zones. In the one inhabited area where there is a legally established nuclear-weapon-free zone, that established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we have seen how difficult it is to reconcile the obligations assumed by the nuclear-weapon States and those States' interests.

(Mr. Perez Guerrero, Venezuela)

This means that in fact there is no guarantee against the military use of nuclear energy or of nuclear weapons themselves, as long as they continue to exist and can be used as instruments of coercion. That argument applies similarly to the so-called negative security guarantees.

This is sharp contrast with the increasing awareness of the peoples of the international community of the dangers inherent in the frenetic arms race. Hence the increasingly urgent need for the fullest possible flow of information to all the inhabitants of the earth about the dangers of the arms race and its many implications. In this respect, the World Disarmament Campaign is of great importance. That is why Venezuela offered to be host to the regional seminar on disarmament for educators in the Americas held in Caracas from 4 to 7 October, which was jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

In this connection it is relevant to emphasize the importance of the work being done by UNESCO in the promotion and encouragement of education for peace.

The challenge facing us, as the Palme report rightly observes, is to ensure that, confronted with the unrestricted nuclear arms race, people all over the world do not ignore the danger involved or lose faith in their ability to change the course of events. Throughout history we have seen how many wars have started while peace talks have been going on. Let us act together to make sure that this never happens again.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): In our common quest for peace and development no other issue occupies as much importance and urgency as does disarmament. Yet this has been the area which has seen less progress and more problems. Despite our concern and commitment, the disarmament negotiations have not so far yielded tangible results. Instead we have been a helpless witness to the ever escalating arms race in both the nuclear and the conventional field. The massive arms build-up not only has disturbed the environment of international peace and security but also poses a serious threat to the very survival of mankind. While all States recognize the need for disarmament and arms control, the tendency to seek security in the accumulation of arms seems to be growing. If the continuing deterioration in the relations between the two super-Powers has been responsible for perpetuating the arms race, the deepening crisis in various parts of the globe has further aggravated the vicious cycle of mistrust and military build up.

The central responsibility for the peaceful management of international crises rests with the United Nations. The present international situation has led to a weakening of this instrument, which we consider vital to ensuring co-operation and common security. We share the deep concern expressed by the Secretary-General over the rapid erosion of the capacity of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, and support his appeal that this instrument be used in a more determined way and that steps be taken immediately to strengthen its security role.

The second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was a dismal failure. The Geneva Committee on Disarmament is virtually barren and the Disarmament Commission, in spite of the recent streamlining, continues to be a forum for long-held national prejudices and concern.

I should now like to turn to some of the items on our agenda.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

As the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament indicated, the principal goal of disarmament is to ensure the survival of mankind by eliminating the danger of war, in particular nuclear war. Nuclear weapons are increasingly regarded as more of a threat than a means of protection, even by those for whose defence they are intended. Long-held concepts of national security are now being challenged. For an increasing number of people a nuclear war would be, as the Secretary-General puts it, "the ultimate negation of all human endeavour" (A/38/1, p. 5). We view the growing popular movement in favour of nuclear disarmament with much expectation. We hope it will exert sufficient pressure on the major Powers to halt and reverse their nuclear competition. While this question concerns the survival of all, the solution lies ultimately in the hands of the nuclear Powers, and particularly the two super-Powers. We therefore reiterate our satisfaction at the fact that negotiations are still under way between them on intermediate-range nuclear forces and strategic arms reduction, and we renew our appeal for an early and meaningful conclusion. It is our hope that they will rise above narrow considerations of bargaining for advantage. Nepal believes that continuing dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States is necessary to open the way to the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

Nepal is deeply concerned over the lack of progress towards a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. We consider that to be an important step to halt the vertical sophistication and the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Both super-Powers have undertaken solemn obligations under the partial test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to work for a comprehensive test ban. A comprehensive test ban, more than any other measure in the field of disarmament, is a matter of political will. As vital technical questions are no longer any problem, it is a matter of great regret that the Committee on Disarmament has failed to report any progress in those negotiations. Pending the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban, my delegation supports the idea of a moratorium on nuclear tests.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

The Non-Proliferation Treaty continues to be the single most important international instrument of the non-proliferation régime. The obvious signs of strain in the non-proliferation régime call for renewed efforts to strengthen that international instrument. The extension and development of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency would also contribute greatly to the strengthening of the régime of the non-proliferation Treaty. The greatest contribution to the strengthening of the Non-Proliferation régime would, however, have to come from the nuclear-weapon States, in fulfilment of their obligation under article VI of the Treaty, concerning nuclear non-proliferation.

My delegation reiterates its stand that non-nuclear States which are not party to any military alliance are entitled to a categorical and legally binding assurance that they will not be subject to a nuclear attack. We regret the lack of progress in this regard in the Working Group of the Committee on Disarmament.

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

Nepal continues to believe that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the basis of agreement freely arrived at between States of a region can be an important step towards nuclear disarmament. The Treaty of Tlatelolco provides a model for other regions of the world, and we welcome efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

Among other important priority items on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament is the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. A great deal of useful work has been done towards the elaboration of an agreement on chemical weapons. Without the active support of the two major Powers and a clear demonstration of political will, there is apprehension that the opportunity to close the deal will be lost.

My delegation has repeatedly called for measures to curb the production and transfer of conventional weapons. The primary move in this regard would be to take practical steps towards reducing the armed forces and armaments of nuclear-weapon States and other militarily important States, particularly in the regions where there are concentrations of troops and armaments. At the same time, however, we must not overlook the growing tendency among the developing countries to accumulate armaments and engage in higher military expenditure. This tendency not only diverts their scarce resources from the critical areas of developmental needs, but also generates tension and mistrust in the region concerned. We hope that the group of experts set up to study conventional disarmament in all aspects will come out with practical steps in this area.

The growing trend among the super-Powers to use outer space for military purposes could add an immensely wasteful and dangerous dimension to the arms race. Nepal shares the international concern and supports the call for elaboration of further legislative measures to prevent the arms race in outer space. We look forward to serious negotiations in this area in the Committee on Disarmament.

The lack of progress in the implementation of the General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace continues to cause us anxiety. My delegation unequivocally supports the convening of the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean within a specified period and without preconditions. We entertain

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

no exaggerated hope that the convening of this Conference will bring peace to the region. The improvement of the political climate in the region could greatly contribute to the success of the Conference, which could be an important step towards the implementation of the Declaration.

I have briefly stated the position of my delegation on a few of the pressing items on our agenda. We shall have occasion to express our views in more detail when individual items are taken up for consideration. The tentative programme of work of this Committee for this year is designed to give more time for deliberations on specific issues. We attach much importance to the debate in this Committee. With a diplomat of the skill, ability and experience of our Chairman to guide our deliberations, we feel confident of the positive outcome of our meetings. I take this opportunity to extend my delegation's felicitations to him and the other officers of the Committee on their election and to pledge our full co-operation with them in the difficult task that lies ahead in this Committee.

Mr. GARCIA ITURBE (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me first of all, Ambassador Elfaki, to extend to you the Cuban delegation's congratulations on your election to the post of Vice-Chairman of this Committee, to lead, along with the other officers, the work of the Committee during the thirty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are familiar with the constant concern with and dedication to disarmament questions that you have shown in the Non-Aligned Movement.

We congratulate also Ambassador Vraalsen on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We are aware of his country's interest in these questions. That interest, together with his personal experience and skill as a diplomat, is a guarantee that under his leadership the work of this Committee will be carried out satisfactorily and that we shall achieve the greatest possible results.

I take this opportunity, too, to congratulate Ambassador Gbeho of Ghana on the efficient manner in which he led our work last year; and I extend our congratulations to Ambassador Tinca of Romania on his election as a Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

The meetings of the First Committee are beginning this year in a world climate that is hardly propitious to international peace and security. There is growing tension, with sources of conflict in various parts of the world; a good part of the technologically most advanced industrial capacity in the world is devoted to creating means of destruction rather than to satisfying mankind's needs, combating hunger and sickness and improving the living standard of human beings.

In spite of the insistent appeals that have been made by the international community for peace, disarmament, international co-operation and peaceful coexistence, the forces of reaction and warlike adventurism are trying to assert themselves by means of aggressive positions, without taking into account the dangers that this entails. As the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement said at the New Delhi Conference:

"... the greatest peril facing the world today is the threat to the survival of mankind from a nuclear war". (A/38/132, annex, para. 28)

The use and the threat of the use of force are evident today in various continents, especially in the Central American and Caribbean regions, where we are witnessing a rich and powerful nation, the United States, carrying out a shameful, dirty war against the heroic people of Nicaragua. The brazenness and power of this imperialist is such that the United States Congress is discussing the amount of money to be allocated to this war - it is now expected that \$50 million will be so allocated - but, what is more, it even wants credit for the actions that have been carried out, such as the recent attacks on the ports of Corinth and Puerto Sandino.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

With the same brazenness they admit the utilization of bases in Honduras and El Salvador both to send supplies to forces subsidized by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States and to train those forces and use the bases to attack Nicaragua directly.

Is this how the Government of the United States intends to support the strengthening of international security and the adoption of confidence-building measures among States? Or can it be that it believes it is co-operating in such strengthening by its inordinate military deployment in various parts of the world?

Those who wish to revive the policies of the "big stick" and "manifest destiny" yearn to add more actions to an already long list of military interventions that, since 1848, have totalled more than 60 in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean, not to mention adventures on other continents.

In violation of General Assembly resolution 37/118 they continue to carry out aggressive military manoeuvres in various regions of the globe, not only in Central America, but also in the Middle East, in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere, none of which contributes to a solution. Such activities only aggravate the problems that threaten international peace and security. The escalation is on such a scale that more than 330,000 men are now engaged in military activities outside that country's borders.

In addition, we are faced with the constant and increasing danger of nuclear war, whose destructive potential and effectiveness is daily being increased by further technological developments. For example there is the Pershing II missile with its targetable nuclear warheads that ensure accuracy within 120 feet after a 1,000-mile flight; there is the oft-mentioned MX missile, whose destructive potential is many times greater than anyone can imagine. When we add to these the nuclear potential that already exists in our world there is enough to transport us in a fraction of a second back to the Stone Age, but this time without homo sapiens.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

A new arms race, this time in outer space, is beginning to take shape in the form of the development of new weapons of increased technological complexity. The anti-satellite attack system (ASAT) project being developed by the United States Government is designed to militarize outer space and to utilize its military potential as a form of domination over and subjugation of peoples, with the express intention of employing such domination for that purpose. That was, in fact, admitted by Mr. Edward C. Aldridge, Under Secretary of the United States Air Force, when he said:

"We do not have to stretch our imagination very far to see that the country that controls outer space can control the world."

The race towards destruction seems to have no limits, and when technological development and science begin to control man, he is on a course towards his own destruction.

We might also add the incredible development of chemical, radiological and bacteriological weapons which, together with the production, stockpiling and continued development of such weapons represents a considerable threat to mankind.

In the course of the First Committee's work my delegation will speak in detail on various items on the agenda. However, we should at this time like to draw the Committee's attention to the adverse effects of the policy of confrontation that some are trying to force upon our work.

An analysis of the report of the Committee on Disarmament on its 1983 session that was submitted yesterday by the Ambassador of Peru, Mr. Morelli Pando, is necessary in our Committee's work in order that we may focus clearly on the reality confronting us. That report states that the Committee on Disarmament began its session on 1 February - and one might think that the document is in error when, later, one reads that at the plenary meeting on 24 March, six weeks later, the working agenda was adopted. But no, there is no error.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

Regrettably the only multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, a body that has received numerous urgent petitions and requests from the General Assembly to proceed without further delay to negotiations on priority disarmament issues, needed more than six weeks to adopt its working agenda. This, let us state quite bluntly, was due to the opposition of a small number of countries to the placing on the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament the item on the prevention of nuclear war. Leading those countries was the United States. That might seem odd, but it is a fact. Several paragraphs of the Final Document of the special session on disarmament of the General Assembly, which was adopted by consensus in 1978, clearly recognize the urgent priority nature of the question of preventing an outbreak of nuclear war. Subsequently, in the communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries held at Havana a few days prior to the opening of the work of the General Assembly's second special session on disarmament, the Ministers called upon that special session to adopt urgent measures to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war. Later, in the Concluding Document of the second special session on disarmament, participating States reaffirmed the validity of the 1978 Final Document, that is, inter alia, they recognized the urgency of avoiding nuclear war. Even more recently, at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, a resolution was adopted that clearly called upon the Committee on Disarmament to undertake as a matter of the highest priority negotiations with a view to achieving agreement on appropriate and practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war.

To the foregoing we might usefully add the many petitions made by non-governmental organizations and eminent scientists throughout the world.

Nevertheless, as its report makes clear, the Committee on Disarmament needed more than six weeks, owing to the stubborn opposition of the United States and some of its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to resolve the question of placing on its agenda an item with regard to

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

preserving mankind from certain destruction. In the end, even though a solution apparently acceptable to all was finally agreed upon and a watered-down version of the item was placed on the agenda, the Committee on Disarmament was unable to enter into meaningful negotiations on that highly important item owing to the opposition of those same States.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

But it was not only on the item on the prevention of nuclear war that the Committee on Disarmament was impeded from carrying out its negotiating activities. It is clear from its report to the Assembly that a total ban on nuclear-weapon tests has suffered the same fate in which all that has been achieved thus far is disregarded, and the commitments entered into are not honoured.

The Government of the United States now declares that banning nuclear-weapon tests is a long-term objective and that it will not undertake negotiations on this subject.

What, it may well be asked, happened to the obligation it assumed in signing the partial nuclear test-ban Treaty, under which a commitment was entered into permanently to suspend all nuclear-weapon tests and the determination was expressed "to continue negotiations to this end"?

Is or is not the attitude that has now been adopted - one which would be imposed on the international community - a flagrant violation of the obligations assumed under the Moscow Treaty or not?

An equally important aspect of the problem was raised in the 1978 Final Document, when, in paragraph 51, it appealed for the urgent conclusion of the trilateral negotiations that were currently under way.

Far from concluding successfully, as was hoped, the negotiations were suspended unilaterally, and there is no indication that they will be resumed.

A similar picture is presented to us when we read that part of the report of the Committee on Disarmament dealing with the prevention of the nuclear arms race and with nuclear disarmament. This item has been on the Committee's agenda for some time now, but also for some time now pressure has been brought to bear not to begin negotiations on this subject.

In my delegation's opinion, we should clearly point to the responsibility of this tiny group of Member States that have obstructed the start of concrete negotiations on matters of the greatest importance for the survival of mankind.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

What right do a few have to impose their will and try to deceive the peoples of the world with exchanges of views, grandiloquent statements and informal meetings in an effort to create the impression that negotiations are under way when, as a matter of fact, that is not the case at all?

Negotiations on nuclear disarmament items should have started a long time ago in the Committee on Disarmament, but the lack of political will on the part of the very States that are opposed to preventing the outbreak of a nuclear war and to a ban on nuclear-weapon tests has made such negotiations impossible thus far.

The arms race, and in particular the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, poses an increasing danger to international peace and security and considerably increases the likelihood that a nuclear conflict with incalculable consequences will break out. In addition, nuclear proliferation and the support given by various countries to Israel and South Africa in the development of such weapons increases the danger of nuclear war for the peoples of the Middle East and Africa and constitutes another means of coercion and force in the hands of Zionists and racists who are doing nothing to help détente and international security.

We cannot accept the arguments with which some would convince us that negotiations to put an end to nuclear weapons depend on extraneous factors and are linked to other areas of inter-State relations, when there is no respect whatsoever for United Nations decisions on disarmament.

The urgency and the necessity to begin negotiations to put an end to the improvement and development of nuclear weapons lie in the very nature of these weapons, for they pose a threat to the very survival of mankind.

The communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, held just before the second special session on disarmament, clearly states that, even though the international political climate affects negotiations on disarmament, the deterioration of the international situation makes it even more urgent and necessary to intensify dialogue and negotiations.

(Mr. Garcia Iturbe, Cuba)

More recently, at the Seventh Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in March in New Delhi, the Heads of State or Government stressed the need to freeze the development, production, stockpiling and emplacement of nuclear weapons and appealed for disarmament negotiations to be accelerated.

The Cuban delegation supports a freeze of nuclear weapons at their present levels and their immediate reduction; it supports the condemnation of nuclear war and the adoption of urgent measures to avoid its outbreak; it supports the immediate banning of all nuclear-weapon tests; it supports the adoption of a treaty banning the use of force in international relations; it supports the prohibition of the use of force in all its forms; it supports a ban on the use of outer space for military purposes; and it supports a ban on the use, development and stockpiling of chemical weapons.

The peoples of the world want to live in peace; those who feel that they are truly representative of the will of their peoples cannot but strive to eliminate the danger of nuclear war and promote general and complete disarmament and the elimination of all forms of chemical, radiological and bacteriological weapons, or any other means of destruction capable of taking the life of any human being or of destroying the resources needed for man to thrive and prosper.

Sub-paragraph (d) of article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba says that "our country is working for lasting peace in dignity based on respect for the independence and sovereignty of peoples and on their right to self-determination". In his book, The World Economic and Social Crisis the President of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers, Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro, appealed for "a tireless struggle for peace, for improving international relations, for halting the arms race, for reducing military expenses drastically and for insisting that a considerable part of these sizeable funds be allocated to the development of the third world".

That will be the policy guiding the work of the Cuban delegation in this Committee at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.