

FINAL RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 24 January 1979, at 3.00 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BOUTEFLIKA (Algeria)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Algeria:

Mr. A. BOUTEFLIKA
Mr. R. BOUDJAKDJI
Mr. A. BENKALI
Mr. A. FASLA
Mr. A. BENSMAIL
Mr. N. KERROUM

Argentina:

Mr. D.C. ORTIZ DE ROZAS
Mr. F. JIMENEZ DAVILA
Mr. A.N. MOLteni

Australia:

Mr. A. SHARP PEACOCK
Mr. L.D. THOMSON
Mr. A.J. BEHM
Ms. M.S. WICKES

Belgium:

Mr. H. SIMONET
Mr. J.A.R. SCHOUMAKER
Mr. P. NOTERDAEME
Mr. P. BERG
Mr. G. VAN DUYSE

Brazil:

Mr. G.A. MACIEL
Mr. L.P. LINDENBERG SETTE
Mr. A. CELSO DE OURO PRETO
Mr. C.A. SIMAS MAGALHAES

Bulgaria:

Mr. P. VOUTOV
Mr. I. PETROV
Mr. I. SOTIROV

Burma:

U SAW HLAING
U THEIN AUNG
U THAUNG HTUN

Canada:

Mr. R. HARRY JAY
Mr. J.T. SIMARD
Mr. G.A.H. PEARSON

Cuba:

Mr. P. TORRAS
Mr. L. SOLA **VILA**
Mr. F. ORTIZ RODRIGUEZ
Mrs. V. BOROWDOSKY JACKIEWICH
Mr. C. PAZOS BECEIRO
Mr. R. VALIENTE
Mr. R. LOPEZ GARCIA

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. M. RUZEK
Mr. V. TYLNER
Mr. J. JIRUSEK

Egypt:

Mr. O. EL-SHAFEI
Mr. F. EL-IBRASHI
Mr. M. EL-BARADEI

Ethiopia:

Mr. T. TERREFE

German Democratic Republic:

Mr. G. HERDER
Mr. S. KAHN
Mr. M. GRACZYNSKI

Germany, Federal Republic of:

Mr. G. PFEIFFER
Mr. H. SCHNEPPEN
Mr. J. POHLMANN
Mr. H. MULLER

Hungary:

Mr. M. DOMOKOS
Mr. C. GYORFFY
Mr. A. LAKATOS

France:

Mr. J. FRANCOIS-PONCET
Mr. P-C. TAITTINGER
Mr. F. DE LA GORCE
Mr. Y. PAGNIES
Mr. J. RIGAUD
Mr. J. BLOT
Mr. J-L. GERGORIN
Mr. F. BEAUCHATAUD
Mr. M.S. HESSEL
Mr. J. FEVRE
Mr. L. DELAMARE
Mr. BRESSOT

India:

Mr. C.R. GHAREKHAN
Mr. S.T. DEVARE
Mr. S. SABHARWAL

Indonesia:

Mr. A. SANI
Mr. A. KAMIL
Mr. M. SIDIK
Mr. I. DAMANIK

Iran:

Mr. M. FARTASH
Mr. D. CHILATY
Mr. D. AMERI

Italy:

Mr. N. DI BERNARDO
Mr. F. FERRETTI
Mr. M. MORENO
Mr. C. FRATESCHI
Mr. G. VALDEVIT

Japan:

Mr. M. OGISO
Mr. T. NONOYAMA
Mr. Y. KIKUCHI
Mr. T. IWANAMI
Mr. Y. NAKAMURA

Kenya:

Mr. K. MWAMZANDI
Mr. C. GATERE MAINA
Mr. G.N. MUNIU

Mexico:

Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
Miss A. CABRERA
Miss L.M. GARCIA

Mongolia:

Mr. D. ERDEMBILEG
Mr. L. BAYART

Morocco:

Mr. A. SKALLI
Mr. M. CHRAIBI

Netherlands:

Mr. R.H. FEIN
Mr. A.J. MEERBURG

Nigeria:

Mr. O. ADENIJI
Mr. K. AHMED
Mr. T.O. OLUMOKO
Mr. R.A. FATUNASE

Pakistan:

Mr. J.K.A. MARKER
Mr. I.A. AKHUND
Mr. M. AKRAM

Peru:

Mr. A. DE SOTO
Mr. J. AURICH MONTERO

Poland:

Mr. B. SUJKA
Mr. S. KONIK
Mr. M. KRUCZYK

Romania:

Mr. I. RADULESCU
Mr. C. ENE
Mr. G. TINCA

Sri Lanka:

Mr. A.C.S. HAMEED
Mr. I.B. FONSEKA
Miss M.L. NAGANATHAN
Mr. R.P.E. JAYASINGHE
Mr. A.C.A.M. NUHUMAN

Sweden:

Mr. H. BLIX
Mrs. I. THORSSON
Mr. C. LIDCARD
Mr. J. PRAWITZ
Mr. J. LUNDIN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. V.L. ISSRAELYAN
Mr. Yu. K. NAZARKIN
Mr. A.M. VAVILOV
Mr. E.D. ZAITSEV
Mr. V.A. VERTOGRADOV
Mr. Yu. V. KOSTENKO
Mr. M.G. ANTIUKHIN

United Kingdom:

Lord GORONWY-ROBERTS
Mr. N.H. MARSHALL
Mr. C.L.G. MALLABY
Mr. C.K. CURWEN
Mr. P.M.W. FRANCIS

United States of America:

Mr. A. FISHER
Mr. C. FLOWEREE
Mr. A. AKALOVSKY
Mr. R. HAGENGRUBER
Ms. B. MURRAY
Mr. M.L. SANCHES
Mr. A. YARMOLINSKY

Venezuela:

Mr. R.C. CASTILLO
Mr. A.R. TAYLHARDAT
Mr. H. ARTEAGA
Miss D. SZOKOLOCZI
Mrs. R. LISBOA DE NECER

Yugoslavia:

Mr. M. PESIC
Mr. M. VRHUNEC
Mr. M. MIHAJLOVIC
Mr. D. DJOKIC

Zaire:

Mr. B. BUKAYI
Mr. M. ESUK

Director-General of the
United Nations Office at Geneva:

Mr. L. COTTAFVI

Assistant Secretary-General
for Disarmament:

Mr. R. BJORNERSTEDT

Mr. GARCIA ROBLES (Mexico). (translated from Spanish): I am pleased to express to you my delegation's sincerest and warmest congratulations on being elected to preside over our deliberations at this first session of the Committee on Disarmament, which was established by the special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament.

Your worthy appointment above all constitutes proof of the international community's high opinion of your outstanding personal qualities and the distinguished course which you have pursued in meetings of the United Nations. Undoubtedly, however, it also constitutes a tribute to your country, Algeria, which has played such a brilliant part in the history of the non-aligned countries, and an acknowledgement of the decisive contribution which these countries made to the convening of the tenth special session of the Assembly through the declaration adopted by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State and Government in August 1976 at Colombo, the hospitable capital of Sri Lanka.

The Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Santiago Roel, although prevented by unpostponable official duties from attending this session in person, wished to address at least a message to the Committee on Disarmament, and I shall now read out the text of this message as a preface to the statement of the delegation of Mexico:

"To afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want' was one of the basic objectives of the Declaration by United Nations signed on 1 January 1942

"The attainment of this objective, for which so many countries fought so bravely in the Second World War, is as urgent now as it was then. Unfortunately, it appears to be even further away today than it was 37 years ago. The world's economic resources have, indeed, multiplied, but its wasteful expenditure on the acquisition of increasingly lethal arsenals has grown at the same pace, if not faster, and the gulf separating the rich countries from the poor has grown wider every day. As the General Assembly of the United Nations aptly stated, 'the hundreds of billions of dollars spent annually on the manufacture or improvement of weapons are a sombre and dramatic contrast to the want and poverty in which two thirds of the world's population live'.

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"The Committee on Disarmament, which is today starting its labours with the membership and organization agreed upon at the recent special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament, is thus confronted with an enormous and inescapable task, namely, to help to eliminate the threat to the very survival of mankind posed by the existence of nuclear weapons and the continuing arms race, and to ensure that disarmament becomes an effective instrument for improving the economic and social conditions of the developing countries, starting with adequate food for their peoples. To use the words of the President of Mexico, José López Portillo, the Committee must endeavour to help not only to prevent war but also to achieve peace.

"In bringing this noble and arduous undertaking to a successful conclusion, the Committee on Disarmament will always be able to rely on the wholehearted contribution of the Mexican Government and people".

The Committee on Disarmament is starting its sessions under auspices which my delegation would not hesitate to describe as promising. In our opinion, it would be pointless to try to elucidate the question whether it is a new body or an old body that has undergone far-reaching reforms. Suffice it to bear in mind something to which there can be no objection and which we would venture to describe as axiomatic, namely, that the Committee on Disarmament is, in many fundamental respects, essentially different from its immediate predecessor, the CCD or Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, and from its more distant ancestor, the 18-nation Committee on Disarmament.

The principal characteristics of the Committee, which is intended to be the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum" available to the General Assembly of the United Nations, are set forth in paragraph 120 of the Final Document on which a consensus was reached precisely at the first special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament. From among these characteristics I shall confine myself to emphasizing the following: a system has been established under which the chairmanship of the Committee will be rotated among all its members on a monthly basis; the Committee will prepare and adopt its own rules of procedure and its own agenda; States which are not members of

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the Committee may participate in its deliberations when they are interested in matters that are the subject of negotiation in the Committee; its meetings will be open to the public unless, exceptionally, otherwise decided; and, last but not least, it will be open to all the nuclear-weapon States.

We welcomed these reforms with particular satisfaction since the delegation of Mexico has earnestly striven for almost 10 years -- as is evidenced by the countless statements and working papers reproduced in the copious documentation of the 18-nation Committee on Disarmament, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament and the First Committee of the General Assembly -- to improve the organization and procedures of the multilateral body for negotiations on disarmament and, in particular, to promote the adoption of a system of general rotation of the chairmanship, similar to the system that has now entered into force, which conforms to the principle of the sovereign equality of States and replaces what we have on several occasions referred to as the "unusual institution" of permanent co-chairmanship. We are convinced that the reforms I have mentioned will enable the Committee on Disarmament to function more efficiently.

Moreover, it is also fitting to recall that the special session, in order widely and prudently, to counterbalance its reforming activity and to enable the greatest possible benefit to be derived from the experience and knowledge accumulated over more than 15 years of negotiations on disarmament in Geneva, adopted the decision which its President defined at the closing meeting of the session when he announced that agreement had been reached on the formula described in paragraph 120 concerning the membership of the Committee. The decision was that all the members of the CCD would automatically become members of the Committee on Disarmament whose work we are beginning today.

Since, in addition to the members with which we have worked for so many years, our Committee now comprises nine new members -- France, Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Cuba, Indonesia, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Venezuela, I think that this is the appropriate moment to tell them all how deeply pleased we are that they should add their efforts to this disarmament undertaking, an undertaking which is perhaps one of the most frustrating but also, undoubtedly, one of the most noble and elevated to which man can devote himself. It is, I think, also the moment to express the sincere hope that China will very soon occupy the place that legitimately belongs to it.

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Apart from this new structure and these basic provisions relating to the organization of the Committee, there are other elements which will also undoubtedly have a favourable influence on the disarmament negotiations. One such element is the fact that, as the fruit of the five weeks of work by the tenth special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations -- work which was presided over in a masterly manner by Mr. Lazar Mojsov, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, and which, in turn, represented the culmination of five arduous sessions of the Preparatory Committee, which, it is only right to recall, was presided over with outstanding skill by the distinguished representative of Argentina, Ambassador Carlos Ortiz de Rozas, who also presided over the Ad Hoc Committee of the tenth special session, the Assembly succeeded in preparing and adopting by consensus a Final Document -- just one, in order to avoid dispersion, as Mexico had had the privilege of suggesting at the outset -- which, in its four sections -- Introduction, Declaration, Programme of Action, and Machinery, defines a series of principles, objectives, priorities, measures and procedures for channelling and promoting the efforts of all countries in such a way as to remove the threat of a nuclear war, to put an end to the arms race and to prepare a comprehensive programme of disarmament encompassing all measures thought to be advisable in order to ensure that the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control becomes a reality in "a world in which international peace and security prevail and in which the new international economic order is strengthened and consolidated".

Never before had the United Nations succeeded in adopting, and still less by consensus -- including France and China, such a comprehensive document which emphatically proclaimed a series of conclusions or provisions -- whose accuracy or compulsory nature, depending on the case, it will in future be impossible to call in question -- such as those defined in the emphatic statements that the increase in weapons, especially nuclear weapons, far from helping to strengthen international security, on the contrary weakens it; that the existing nuclear arsenals and the

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continuing arms race pose a threat to the very survival of mankind; that there is a close relationship between disarmament and development, and that any resources that may be released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be used to bridge the economic gap between developed and developing countries; that in accordance with the Charter, the United Nations has a central role and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament and that therefore Member States must keep the United Nations duly informed of all steps, whether unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral, taken outside its aegis.

We believe that a beneficial influence will also be exerted by the fact that the machinery for disarmament deliberations has been strengthened as a result of the decision that the First Committee of the General Assembly should deal in the future only with questions of disarmament and related international security questions, and that there will be a Disarmament Commission composed of all the States Members of the United Nations which will meet for a period of four weeks between sessions of the General Assembly.

The foregoing must not, however, cause us to overlook the situation with which we are currently confronted. This situation has been masterfully described in words which, since they were approved by consensus after prolonged and thorough debate, I feel obliged to quote exactly as they appear in paragraph 4 of the Final Document of the session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament. The paragraph reads as follows:

"The Disarmament Decade solemnly declared in 1969 by the United Nations is coming to an end. Unfortunately, the objectives established on that occasion by the General Assembly appear to be as far away today as they were then, or even further because the arms race is not diminishing but increasing and outstrips by far the efforts to curb it. While it is true that some limited agreements have been reached, 'effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament' continue to elude man's grasp. Yet the implementation of such measures is urgently required.

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There has not been any real progress either that might lead to the conclusion of a treaty on general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Furthermore, it has not been possible to free any amount, however modest, of the enormous resources, both material and human, which are wasted on the unproductive and spiralling arms race and which should be made available for the purpose of economic and social development, especially since such a race 'places a great burden on both the developing and the developed countries'."

These are the deplorable conditions which are afflicting the world and which we must do everything possible to remedy. To this end, two principal categories of measures should be adopted.

The first of these categories covers measures of a predominantly procedural nature aimed at ensuring that the Committee on Disarmament is as effective as possible. Measures in this category fall totally within our responsibility since, as is stated in paragraph 113 of the Final Document of the General Assembly, "the international machinery should be utilized more effectively and also improved to enable implementation of the Programme of Action and help the United Nations to fulfil its role in the field of disarmament".

This means that at the session of the Committee on which we are embarking maximum efforts will have to be made to prepare and adopt rules of procedure and a programme or agenda appropriate for the achievement of these objectives.

This is not the time to enter into details concerning either of these two subjects. I should merely like to make a few general observations about them.

With reference to the agenda we feel that the system followed in the CCD will have to be radically altered so that, under such general headings as it may be deemed appropriate to maintain permanently, there are included each year specific measures to which the Committee considers it advisable to devote priority attention at the different sessions.

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In our opinion, it will also have to be borne closely in mind that, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 50 of the Final Document, the achievement of nuclear disarmament, which merits the highest priority, "will require urgent negotiation of agreements at appropriate stages and with adequate measures of verification satisfactory to the States concerned", for the results which are specified in the Document and should culminate in "a comprehensive, phased programme with agreed time-frames, whenever feasible, for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time". It seems to us that such negotiations will require that, after a reasonable period of time, talks such as the so-called SALT talks which have been held outside the CCD should henceforth be held within this multilateral negotiating body which is the Committee on Disarmament. If it is feared that the membership of the Committee is too large and that this fact would protract the negotiations, consideration might be given to the adoption of a procedure similar to that used by the Disarmament Commission between 1954 and 1957, namely, the establishment of a sub-committee consisting solely of the nuclear Powers, on the understanding that it would act as a subsidiary organ of the Committee, which it would keep duly informed of the progress of the negotiations.

One question on which it is impossible to remain silent when examining, even as briefly as I am doing, the subject of nuclear disarmament is the urgent need for the Committee on Disarmament to have, at an early date, a preliminary draft treaty on the total cessation of nuclear-weapon testing, an objective which the United Nations has been pursuing for more than a quarter of a century now and concerning which the General Assembly has adopted such pressing and categorical resolutions. We are confident that the three nuclear-weapon States which have been dealing with this question for quite a long time already will take proper note of the grave responsibility incumbent on them in this matter.

Without prejudice to the highest priority which should be accorded to nuclear weapons, the Committee's agenda should also include consideration of those items which it is found advisable to study in relation to the other types of weapons

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expressly listed in paragraph 45 of the Final Document, namely, other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and conventional weapons, to which the Document devotes no less than six paragraphs, in which, for the first time in its history, the United Nations adopted a well-balanced series of substantive decisions of obvious importance on the matter.

As far as the rules of procedure are concerned, it seems to us essential that they should include provisions -- adopted, naturally, by consensus -- which would prevent the Committee on Disarmament from being paralysed -- as unfortunately the CCD so frequently was -- whenever the nuclear-weapon Powers do not succeed in submitting to it a joint text for the preparation of a treaty or convention on nuclear disarmament measures. We are convinced that there is no reason why it should be an essential requirement for the nuclear Powers to transmit to the multilateral negotiating body an absolutely complete text of a preliminary draft treaty or convention which they have been negotiating among themselves. On the contrary, we believe that there would be far from negligible advantages if the body in question were to take note of all those parts of the preliminary draft which had already been completed, on the understanding that it would take note of the missing parts as they in turn were completed. In this way, the nuclear Powers would benefit from the viewpoints of the other members of the Committee and, in particular, of the members of the Group of 21 which, by reason of their impartiality, might serve to provide the element of conciliation or compromise that sometimes eludes the nuclear-weapon States, which are too engrossed in the interests of their respective military alliances.

Apart from measures of the type which I have just outlined and which, in our opinion and as I have already said, will be for each and every one of us as representatives of the members of the Committee to endeavour to put into practice at this session, it will be necessary to bear in mind that "the decisive factor for achieving real measures of disarmament is the 'political will' of States" and that, to quote from the Final Document again "In the task of achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament, all the nuclear-weapon States, in particular those among them which possess the most important nuclear arsenals, bear a special responsibility".

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This is the second category of measures to which I referred earlier. It is here -- in the will to demonstrate by deeds that we wish to discharge the responsibilities, whether special or not, deriving from the provisions of the Final Document -- that lies the key to the fate of both the negotiations and the multilateral deliberations on disarmament.

My delegation is convinced that, as we stated in a text which we submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session and which has become General Assembly resolution 33/71 F, having been adopted by consensus, the provisions of the Final Document constitute a consistent and articulated whole which provides a solid basis to set in motion an international disarmament strategy that makes it possible at the same time:

(a) To carry out what is the most acute and urgent task of the present day, namely, the removal of the threat of a world war, which would inevitably be a nuclear war,

(b) To channel the negotiations among States towards the final goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control, on the understanding that such negotiations shall be conducted concurrently with negotiations on partial measures of disarmament,

(c) To strengthen international peace and security and to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples, thus facilitating the achievement of the new international economic order.

This is why it seems to us most fitting that the special session should have proclaimed in its Final Document -- to which, incidentally, we have made such frequent references in this statement because we consider that it should be accorded a value similar to that of Constitutions in domestic law -- that the "Pressing need now is to translate '... its provisions ...' into practical terms ... and to proceed along the road of binding and effective international agreements in the field of disarmament".

As it said at the closing plenary meeting of the General Assembly on disarmament, my delegation is convinced that, for any objective observer who, without ceasing to be an idealist, has a clear idea of the realities of the world in which we live and of the limitations which they entail, this special session may be regarded as a success because it achieved everything that could reasonably be expected in the immediate future.

(Mr. Garcia Robles, Mexico)

The long-term results and history's verdict on the session will however, depend on what peoples and the Governments representing them in the United Nations and in bodies such as the one in which we are gathered do to prevent what was agreed upon in New York in June 1978 from remaining a dead letter, as unfortunately has happened so often in other similar cases.

For this reason, we regard as very apt the statement made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kurt Waldheim, in the introduction to his annual report on the work of the Organization, in which he included, inter alia, ideas such as those which I am now about to quote in closing this statement and which essentially coincide with the ideas expressed by the President of Mexico to which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country referred in the message to the Committee which I have already read out:

"The success of the special session should not be a reason for complacency. It marks not the end but rather the beginning of a new phase of the efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We have an international disarmament strategy. We must now implement it with the utmost dedication and energy. By the time the next special session of the General Assembly on disarmament is held, we should be able to show to the world that the race for survival has gained an irreversible lead over the arms race."

Mr. FRANCOIS-PONCET (France) (translated from French): Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, in the matter of disarmament, one must be mistrustful of words. What counts are ideas and acts. Our meeting today is important in that it is the expression of an idea, and perhaps the beginning of an act. That is why France wishes to be present.

This meeting, in the conditions in which it is taking place, appears to the French Government to be laden with significance.

First of all, turning to you, Mr. Chairman, let me say that France is happy to see that Algeria, which you represent with the authority and competence that everyone acknowledges, has been called upon to preside over this meeting. The presence of your country in this forum and in that seat reflects a profound change in the international approach to the problem of disarmament, a change that has been called for by many countries which, like France, consider that disarmament should not be the preserve of a few Powers, but the affair of all.

(Mr. François-Poncet, France)

The second significant fact is that this meeting is being held at Geneva, the capital of disarmament and the city of the United Nations. The history of this city is inseparable from that of a long line of men of goodwill who for 50 years have been working for peace and disarmament. The results of the efforts are disappointing, it is true; but the noble objectives of the pioneers and visionaries of disarmament should at least continue to inspire our action, even if the harsh lessons of recent history teach us realism. It is significant also that this meeting is being held under the auspices of the United Nations. It is, indeed, the direct consequence of the decisions taken at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, decisions which mark a profound change in the approach to the problem.

And finally, also significant, in any case in the eyes of France, is the participation of my country in this meeting, a participation which marks its re-entry into an essential debate from which it had stood aside only with regret and always retaining the hope, which has been fulfilled today, that when conditions were appropriate it would be able to resume the active role which it had long played.

Never has there been so much talk of disarmament. And never has man had in his hands so great an arsenal of weapons. The history of disarmament is the history of a contradiction between two feelings: immense hope in the face of the task to be accomplished; immense frustration at the scantiness of the results obtained. How, in such circumstances, can one avoid becoming resigned to the attitude of States which, by ever more costly and hazardous methods, seek the means of ensuring their security? And yet -- and this is the conviction of France as it was expressed last spring from the rostrum of the United Nations -- it is possible to break the vicious circle of sterile discussions which result in the last analysis in a proliferation of arms and distrust.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, this is the first time I have had occasion to express myself publicly, on the international scene, on this formidable problem. Will you allow me for a brief moment to describe the personal feeling that I have? As politicians and diplomats we wield, with the sangfroid of specialists, terms that are terrible because they express a reality that is equally terrible. Behind each one of the words we shall use in this debate, there is death or life,

(Mr. François-Poncet, France)

war or peace. The balance of military forces is not merely a mathematical equation, it is a reality that weighs heavy on our flesh-and-blood existence. And words of hope are just as weighty as those of fear, for they also have implications for the future of the human race. It would be just as dangerous for the future of peace to discourage hope as to condone resignation. If prudence is essential in our discussions, it is not in order to lessen our conviction, but better to measure our responsibility to the peoples who expect much of us.

It is in this light that France sees its contribution to the debate.

Mr. Chairman, France does not claim that it is proposing a complete plan of disarmament. It has, with regard to this problem, defined an approach which it believes to be original, and which is based on a number of guiding principles from which it has deduced some concrete proposals for discussion in various instances: in the United Nations, here, or in the regional framework. I would now like to mention those guiding principles and those concrete proposals here, before taking up the problems of methods appropriate for this Committee.

In order to have any chance of making progress, it is essential to start from a realistic conception. The hope which inspires us would remain a blind hope if it were not guided by lucidity.

Is there any need for me to mention the fundamental principles which govern relations between States, and to stress that these principles are constantly being violated in day-to-day reality? Here a sovereign State is invaded; these territories are victims of de facto annexation; elsewhere States resort to violence and not to arbitration for settling frontier disputes; certain subversive activities are encouraged from abroad. The use of violence or the resort to intimidation are widespread attitudes.

In this situation, there are two temptations: the first is to freeze the existing international balances through the perpetuation of blocs reflecting hegemonies; the second is to believe that general and complete disarmament is possible in the world as it is.

Those two courses, which are opposite in respect of the principles underlying them, seem to be equally disastrous with regard to their consequences.

(Mr. Francois-Poncet, France)

It is not by appropriating zones of influence and by aligning small and medium-sized nations with the largest countries that war-like intentions will be eliminated.

No more is it by advocating universal renunciation of national defence capacities and by allowing this unrealistic and unverifiable objective to serve as an alibi for those who hope to derive many benefits from the status quo that disarmament can be made a reality.

There is only one course which is consistent both with the exigencies of the debate in which life and death are at stake, and with the pragmatism required to deal with a changing and dangerous reality: this course is to start from the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, from which the right of States and peoples to security is derived. In the opinion of France, this right to security comprises three elements:

1. Strict observance of the international guarantees of security, starting with those in the Charter of the United Nations;
2. The right for each State to organize its defence in such a manner that it can deter a potential aggressor;
3. The obligation for each State not to arm itself beyond a level which others regard as a threat.

From this right to security as so defined --which is one of the basic elements of a need that is felt by all the peoples of the earth, namely the need for self-affirmation--there arises the first objective which should be set for any disarmament plan, the attainment by each country of the minimum level of armament compatible with its security.

Also, if there is to be any hope of attaining such an objective, four essential conditions must be met at the action level.

The first condition is universality, which means that disarmament is the affair of everyone and must be achieved with the assistance and under the control of all. With the assistance of all, since disarmament cannot be reduced to the idea which the powerful may have of the security of the weak. Under the control of all, since there can be no progress in disarmament without an improvement in confidence.

(Mr. Francois-Poncet, France)

Next, diversity, since the geography of threats must be matched by a geography of security which takes account of regional differences. In this respect, one fundamental distinction results from the existence of a vast region of the world in which nuclear deterrence constitutes a major element in the existing balance. And it must be admitted that the nuclear phenomenon, to the extent that it has been mastered by the logic of stable and mutual deterrence, has made it possible to ward off the risk of war in this zone for more than 30 years.

That is why France recommends that the global approach which must be yours in this Committee should be complemented by a regional approach to disarmament.

Third, solidarity, since if, for the poorest nations, there can be no right to security without the right to development, it is only by putting an end to the scandal of the arms race that it will become possible to devote substantial additional resources to the task of reducing inequalities between peoples.

And lastly, pragmatism, since it is by analysing the dangers as they are perceived by States that one may hope to arrive at effective measures and at the consensus necessary for their application. The essential factors of instability must be determined, and efforts must be made to alleviate the intolerable burden of threats by gradually eliminating them. It is through this dialectic of security and disarmament that the world in general, and each region in particular, will arrive at less distressing conditions of life.

France does not of course reject the ultimate objective of real, general and controlled disarmament; however, it does not regard it as a present possibility, but as the end point of mankind's long march towards total solidarity.

From this over-all conception, of which I have just described the main elements, France has worked out a number of lines of action and concrete proposals, some of which are global in nature, and some regional. I wish to stress that they are not exhaustive; France reserves the right to supplement them, just as it is, of course, willing to examine with care and objectivity those of other countries.

(Mr. François-Poncet, France)

France is desirous that, at the appropriate moment, it should be you who take up these proposals of a global nature since you, ladies and gentlemen, are the first expression of the new conception of disarmament.

When the French Government observed a year ago that the United Nations was the natural framework for the debates of the international community, it requested that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament should be replaced by a forum of discussion which, by its composition and procedures, would represent a genuine innovation.

That was a prerequisite for any serious attempt to get out of the impasse in which disarmament negotiations had become bogged down. And so the tenth special session, having decided on the reform of the negotiating and deliberative machinery, established new principles governing the creation of your Committee.

The Committee, benefiting from its relationship with the United Nations, reflects the diversity of the world in its composition and respects regional balances. The abandonment of the co-chairmanship and the adoption of the rule of consensus are truly the expression of the principle of the equality of States with regard to the right to security.

In proposing also the establishment of an International Institute for Research on Disarmament, France wished that all States should have an objective instrument of reflection and expert investigation.

The Institute would be an independent instrument of research attached to the United Nations, and its work would supplement, on a longer-term and more scientific basis, the very useful and highly appreciated efforts already made by the Secretariat of the United Nations.

I am happy to note that the thirty-third session of the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to study the modalities for the establishment of such an Institute.

There is no disarmament without control and, in the course of your work, you must constantly be faced by this obvious fact. New technologies -- particularly space technologies -- are, as you know, opening up an increasingly wide range of possibilities. This is why France has proposed that an international satellite monitoring agency should be set up under the auspices of the United Nations.

(Mr. Francois-Poncet, France)

The thirty-third session of the General Assembly showed its interest in this proposal by deciding without opposition that a three-fold investigation should be undertaken: inquiries by the Secretary-General among Member States, a meeting of a group of qualified government experts and a report by the Secretary-General to the thirty-fourth session. In the course of this procedure, in which it will participate, France will supplement its proposals and, in doing so, will endeavour to answer the questions which they have raised in certain quarters.

In order to emphasize the relationships between disarmament and development, which are now being demonstrated by the work of a qualified group of experts, my country put forward the proposal to establish an international disarmament fund for development. The General Assembly has expressed the wish that our proposal should be referred to that group for its consideration. All sections of the international community must realize, without further delay, that development and security are the two indissociable foundations of a new international economic order.

The work of your Committee will naturally be concerned with the global aspects of disarmament, but should not disregard the efforts which are being made at the regional level in the self-same search for greater security.

In regions that are not covered by the nuclear deterrent, it is in the interest of all that they should protect themselves from the dissemination of atomic weapons. The French Government, which is particularly aware of this need, intends to contribute to a constructive policy of non-proliferation based on non-discrimination. But it is of course for the States concerned themselves to renounce nuclear weapons, a decision which can come only from an affirmation of their own will. President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing emphasized in New York the role which the creation of nuclear-free zones could play in this respect. A joint declaration by all the countries in a given region of their intention not to acquire this type of weapon would make it possible to strengthen a situation that is necessarily unstable at the present time. France, for its part, is naturally willing to draw the inferences from such a gesture, and this is what it is preparing to do in the case of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Moreover, it cannot fail to indicate its interest in initiatives freely taken by the countries of a region with a view to strengthening their mutual confidence or entering into agreements on the limitation of the level of conventional weapons.

(Mr. François-Poncet, France)

In the vast expanse of the northern hemisphere covered by the nuclear deterrent, disarmament should deal as a matter of priority with two major factors of instability: the excessive size of the strategic arsenals of the super-Powers in relation to their need for mutual deterrents, and the unbalanced accumulation of conventional weapons in Europe.

The two major nuclear Powers should therefore make urgent and systematic efforts to reduce their arsenals to a level commensurate with the actual requirements of deterrence. As long as the existence of such a superabundant nuclear destruction capability leaves open the possibility of the virtually total annihilation of mankind, disarmament will remain an academic notion.

Accordingly, though France supports the two major Powers when they make progress in their bilateral strategic arms limitation negotiations, it must point out that the objective of this difficult enterprise should be a substantial reduction in their arsenals and the freezing of their technological competition without impairing the security of the two partners and their allies as a result.

It goes without saying that the problem arises in an entirely different manner for the medium-sized nuclear Powers such as France, since the disproportion between their forces -- which are limited to the defence of their vital interests alone -- and the strategic arsenals of the super-powers is quite obvious.

The accumulation of conventional armaments leads France to propose the convening of a disarmament conference in Europe.

Europe is a geographical and historical reality. It is also a region that is clearly delimited from the military standpoint, and it is the site of the most formidable concentration of conventional weapons that the world has ever known. This accumulation, which is already detrimental to détente, is bound to have serious effects on détente if it continues and accelerates.

This is why we have invited all States with forces on the continent to discuss together, on a footing of equality and aside from the confrontation of blocs, ways and means of achieving genuine disarmament.

(Mr. Francois-Poncet, France)

The main object would be to put an end to over-armament with conventional weapons and to the imbalances this involves. However, in order to establish the climate of confidence without which States would not agree to embark on the process of reduction, the first stage of the conference should be devoted to the elaboration of a series of measures designed on the one hand to co-ordinate, and on the other hand to improve and equalize the publication of data -- i.e., mutual knowledge of military potentials, structures and activities. Efforts should also be made at this stage to limit and control manoeuvres and movements that might conceal a surprise attack.

A comparison of the theories on the use of forces and of the strategies of the different participants would make for better mutual understanding, and would also lead to reflection on what might be the optimum level of security for European armies -- a level which would allow nations to keep the means necessary for their individual and collective self-defence, but would not provide them with the means for launching an aggression.

It would be for the European disarmament conference, in the second phase of its work, to find objective criteria, acceptable to all, on which to base such research. If all armies in Europe were to conform to a strictly defensive type of military structure, after gradual reductions and re-equipment, a new era of peace and confidence would begin for Europe.

Some will ask whether for this purpose it is necessary to create a new negotiating forum, when the CSCE and the MBFR talks already exist. We believe it is essential to do so, since the measures of confidence which we are proposing differ from those of Helsinki by their scope, their mandatory nature, the verifications to which they would be subject and their geographic range of application. Moreover, as they would also be connected with the subsequent adoption of specific provisions for the reduction of military equipment, they would be situated altogether outside the framework of the Final Act.

With regard to the MBFR talks, everyone is aware of our objections to negotiations on the creation, in the middle of Europe, of a zone in which countries would be permanently subject to certain specific obligations under the control of the two major Powers, a system which would, moreover, have the effect of redeploying armaments rather than reducing them.

(Mr. Francois-Poncet, France)

Nevertheless, our intention -- and I wish to make this quite clear here -- is certainly not to interfere with these negotiations, and we see no reason why the two exercises should not be conducted simultaneously.

We have also been asked why we limited the subject of this conference to conventional disarmament.

First, because it is not appropriate to place on the same footing, and discuss together in the same negotiations, weapons which are completely different in their nature, significance and use.

Secondly, because -- since the bulk of the nuclear weapons belong to two great Powers and form part of a general balance which extends far beyond the confines of Europe -- responsibility for nuclear disarmament rests with those two Powers.

We are nevertheless aware of the complementarity of the two forms of disarmament, since the existence of the nuclear deterrent in Europe is indissociable from the threat posed there by conventional weapons. Whether any progress is made with general disarmament will depend on the extent to which the European disarmament conference achieves satisfactory results.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are thus the first manifestation of a new concept of disarmament.

I am sure that you will conduct your work with the open-mindedness and the rigour which the requirements of the coming decades demand. To achieve this, your Committee will have to remain true to its founding principles; and, being itself an innovation, it will have to ensure that its work and methods reflect this renewal.

It is gratifying that all the nuclear Powers have been invited to resume their seats on the Committee and that the voice of great China can make itself heard here whenever it deems it desirable.

Nevertheless it is still true that, through the United Nations General Assembly, its First Committee and the newly-instituted Disarmament Commission, the disarmament endeavour will above all be inspired by the principle of universality. How then could you, as the main negotiating body depart from this rule, whose most normal form of expression is the search for a consensus?

(Mr. Francois-Poncet, France)

If your Committee were to depart from the principle of the universal right to security in order to revert to commitments that are essentially bipolar, France would be driven back again to its former reservations. And if it were to confine itself to abstract discussions, it would not live up to the expectations of the peoples.

What we seek is a disarmament effort that is serious, practical and effective. To achieve this, it is essential to base our work on a realistic vision of the international situation, of the East-West relations which determine the strategic balance, and of the North-South relations, which are characterized by the aspiration for harmony between two regions of the world that are divided by the inequalities of their development.

There will be no disarmament without a deepening of détente. Between East and West, confrontation is gradually giving way to the search for a balance. But this balance between the blocs cannot permanently and satisfactorily be a balance of terror and mistrust. We must take new and ambitious steps along the road that was opened at Helsinki, and go beyond an excessively narrow and limited concept of détente. In a word, Europe, which has been divided and paralysed by the cold war, must open itself to nations and to people. France, for its part, thinks that this is possible, and believes it has shown that it can be done with full respect for national independence and fidelity to alliances.

At the same time, however, we must realize that the advancement of détente is not in itself enough to create the conditions for genuine disarmament. Transformation of North-South relations is equally important for the success of our enterprise, because the gap between developed countries and those which aspire to development is a source of frustration which might well result in a challenging of the balances that are alleged to have been established between the rich of the East and the rich of the West in their own interests. France considers it important therefore to institute a constructive dialogue between North and South based on mutual trust. But, in the East-West and the North-South dialogue alike, it is essential to convince people of their solidarity, and to help them discover the fundamental unity of their aims, despite their rivalries and even their armed conflicts.

(Mr. François-Poncet, France)

The new and promising body whose creation we acclaim today -- the United Nations Committee on Disarmament -- can make a contribution precisely to the attainment of these objectives.

The CHAIRMAN (translated from French): I would like to thank Mr. Jean François-Poncet for the substantial contribution by France, and to tell him how greatly we appreciated the remarks he made with respect to Algeria and to myself. I now call upon the third speaker on my list, the Honourable Hameed, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, to take the floor.

Mr. HAMEED (Sri Lanka): Mr. Chairman, may I at the commencement of my remarks congratulate you on your assumption of duties as Chairman of this first meeting of the Committee on Disarmament. We regard it as a tribute to your country and to you personally, Mr. Chairman, that this first meeting of the Committee should be presided over by Algeria. Your country has made significant contributions to the cause of mediation and peace in the forums of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and not least of all within our non-aligned movement in which your country was a distinguished member even before your independence.

In the last days of the year just over, the international community joined the Algerian people to mourn the untimely passing of President Boumedienne. He was an architect of your liberation and under his leadership and guidance Algeria has made a lasting impact in the Councils of the world. I am confident that you will guide our deliberations in the spirit and with the wisdom which your country has inherited from your great leader.

I have yet another duty to perform and it is to thank those members of this Committee who supported our nomination to its membership. We are aware that among the criteria adopted for membership of the Committee on Disarmament is that of being a militarily significant State -- a qualification which Sri Lanka can hardly claim to satisfy. That we were included among the eight new members of the Committee is, we believe, a tacit acknowledgement of the contribution which the militarily less significant can make to disarmament -- a contribution which in my country's case derives from the policies and positions which the Government of Sri Lanka under the leadership of my President, His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene, has chosen to follow.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

This Committee is meeting today as a consequence of the United Nations special session on disarmament held in May and June last year. Mr. Chairman, as a fellow-member of the non-aligned movement, you would know that the special session was the result of the sustained efforts of the non-aligned group which as far back as 1961 first called for the convening of a special session devoted to disarmament. That objective was realized in 1978 following the resolution which my country's . . . delegation, in our capacity of Chairman of the non-aligned movement, was privileged to propose at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly on behalf of the non-aligned community.

The Final Document of the special session which dealt with the machinery of disarmament established the United Nations Disarmament Commission to function as the deliberative body and this Committee on Disarmament to constitute the negotiating body. The Disarmament Commission was inspired and fashioned so as to give all States an opportunity and a role in this vital task of disarmament. In the context of our time this was as far as we could go to reach a consensus in order to democratize the institutions of disarmament. Those of us who participated in the special session will recall the protracted exchanges that took place on the role that the United Nations should play in the sphere of disarmament. The emphasis given by the non-aligned to the United Nations was because it is the most representative body. And through the Disarmament Commission we shall strive to implement that democratization, to give meaning to the letter and spirit of the Final Document of the special session.

Mr. Chairman, you will also recall the no less arduous negotiations that preceded the reform of the negotiating body -- this Committee on Disarmament. While we in the non-aligned believed that little or no progress of consequence had taken place in disarmament negotiations, there were those who believed otherwise and accordingly were averse to any major reform of the negotiating body. What we are today in this Committee is a reflection of what had been agreed upon and was accepted as the most realistic compromise, rather than what we could justifiably claim was the will of an overwhelming majority. We nevertheless view this Committee as a better representation of that overwhelming majority whose aspirations to realize the goal of disarmament we shall continue to urge within this Committee.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate my Government's views on how we see our role in this Committee. As one of the new members of the Committee, we shall listen and learn as we contribute. While not discounting the advances made in the negotiating body in the past, we regard this Committee as a significant new beginning aimed at giving the disarmament process a new and decisive impetus. The increase in its membership, the adoption of its own rules of procedure, the appointment of its Secretary, the rotation of its Chairmanship, the adoption of its own agenda, the provision for the participation of States not members of the Committee -- these we regard not as mere tokens but as tangible evidence of the Committee's new role and the expectations of the international community from its members.

I would make just one comment on the decision-making process of consensus which we know was cardinal to the coming into being of this Committee. Consensus is the only possible criterion for decision-making in the context of today. In our efforts to reach this consensus we should not be oblivious of the concern for security and -- I say this without seeking to dramatize the issue -- the very existence of the vast majority of the human family. When it was decided in our Final Document that this Committee's plenary meetings were to be open to the public, we believe that it was intended as more than a gesture and that this public, representing the ordinary citizens of our countries, will be the real arbiters of the worth of this Committee.

It was not my intention, Mr. Chairman, to take this Committee's time in recapitulating the views and positions which have been stated during the special session and in the First Committee of the General Assembly. But a brief reference to some of these issues is difficult to avoid. As distinguished delegates would know, when I spoke of the threat to the very existence of the human family, it was the threat of nuclear war that I had in mind. Nuclear disarmament, therefore, is the imperative need and we gave this the highest priority in the Final Document. We are not so naive as to expect instant results. Nevertheless what does discourage us is the appallingly slow pace of negotiations on even what might be called the distant preludes to nuclear disarmament. The SALT II agreements which

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we had hoped for as a happy augury for the special session have not yet been concluded -- though we are told that they are imminent. The draft of a comprehensive test-ban treaty is still with the three nuclear-weapon States with no indication of its coming before this Committee. In the past, we understand, draft agreements of this nature were placed before this Committee in the expectation that its members would have little to say and therefore the drafts would receive prompt acceptance. That, Mr. Chairman, is an attitude which we hope will not be prevalent in this new Committee. If our membership is for the purpose of being onlookers waiting to endorse agreements, our participation in this Committee would be reduced to a farce.

I would like to make a passing but relevant observation at this stage. We readily recognize that disarmament and, even more, nuclear disarmament is an infinitely complex exercise involving technical competence that my own country hardly claims to possess. However, as a representative of an elected political leadership, I am obliged to ask whether, even in those States which have the technical competence, are not the issues presented in coherent non-technical terms to the political leadership who must in the last analysis take the necessary decisions and explain them to their people? A similar presentation can take place in this Committee and I would venture to think that it is well within the capacity of all our members to evaluate the issues and fulfil our role as active and constructive participants in the work of this Committee. My Government will give its best efforts in this direction.

Earlier in my remarks I made a reference to the democratization of the disarmament process which was one objective of the special session. I revert to this only to draw attention to the proposals which were brought before the special session by individual States. The Final Document lists these proposals and among them is one made by my President, His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene, for a World Disarmament Authority. It is not my intention to amplify that proposal before this Committee. We did so at the special session. The General Assembly at its thirty-third session adopted by consensus a resolution we sponsored to carry forward the proposals in paragraph 125 of the Final Document. While we

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heard some doubts expressed about the need to have these proposals even studied, we regard the adoption of that resolution by consensus as at least a vindication of what is stated in the Final Document: that all States have the duty to contribute to efforts in the field of disarmament and all States have the right to participate in disarmament negotiations.

My remarks would be incomplete without a reference to what we see as a recurring phenomenon obstructing even the present slow process of disarmament negotiations. What I have in mind is the tendency among the major military alliances to view international political changes as having a direct bearing on their security. The invariable response or, one might even say, the instinctive reaction to such changes is the slowing down or even freezing of on-going negotiations. The recourse to this form of linkage has tended to be increasingly frequent. The sequel often takes the form not just of an interruption or freezing of negotiations but of a call for new increases in arms expenditure. To recount the theories and remedies and the well-known "isms" that bring this about would be a recital of history both ancient and modern for which this Committee is no forum. But it would be sufficient to recall just the events of the last 30 years for evidence that armaments have neither ensured durable security nor durable allies. In our own time we have been witness to events which were not just unlikely but would have been dismissed as impossible a decade or two ago. I make this remark not to pronounce judgement on the events themselves but to emphasize the futility of security based on an accumulation of armaments. The device of linkage may allow a breathing spell but it postpones the essential choice which is either a fresh acceleration of the arms race or what we must now try to realize -- a halt and a reversal of this process.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, the picture is not wholly one of gloom. Within the major alliances we see signs of acceptance of the truth that armaments alone are no guarantee of security. If this trend gathers momentum we may yet see an abandoning of what has been for some an article of faith: that the nuclear deterrent has been the proven instrument that has kept the peace. Perhaps it has kept the peace,

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

Mr. Chairman, in one area where we are told tensions are greatest and therefore any serious conflict will lead to a major disaster for the whole world. We have long heard the exhortation that peace is indivisible but looking at our own regions of Asia and Africa where armed conflicts of varying magnitudes have continued unceasingly one wonders whether the cost of peace in Europe and the West is being paid for elsewhere.

These last remarks may be regarded as a facile over-simplification. But I had more than just armed confrontations in mind. The heavier and more damaging toll of the arms race is the inflation that ravages our economies and like any epidemic knows no frontiers. Even those regions in which a tenuous peace prevails have to pay the price, and we in the Third World are much less able to bear that burden. I may have diverged from the purposes of our Committee by introducing this issue but it is not without relevance. Earlier in my remarks I referred to Sri Lanka's membership in this Committee being a tacit acknowledgement of the contribution that militarily less significant States can make to disarmament. There is another way in which we can make a contribution and that is as one of those countries variously described as developing, as least developed and most seriously affected and we are not alone in this respect in this Committee.

Mr. Chairman, I have in the course of my remarks sought to outline our approach to some of the important issues before this Committee. Assembled as we are in this Council Chamber we can scarcely forget the long efforts of those who laboured before us, within these same walls, to bring about the disarmament which is also our goal. Their experience makes us even more aware that our work is the continuation of a long process of seeking to establish the climate of confidence and co-operation that would allow for real progress towards the limitation of armaments without risk to national security. We know that we shall have to be content with limited successes and also accept disappointments. Yet we have no alternative but to persist in our efforts. May I conclude by assuring you, Mr. Chairman, of my delegation's fullest co-operation in the work of this Committee.

Mr. PEACOCK (Australia): Arms control and disarmament are the gravest problems facing the world today. Solutions are imperative. I know that we share a joint belief that solutions are possible, and this is the reason that the Committee on Disarmament is meeting for the first time today. I need not remind you that there has in the past been a lack of substantial progress in reaching effective arms control and disarmament measures. The special session, however, marked a turning point, because it was there that Governments demonstrated a willingness to confront directly the problems of conventional and nuclear arms build up. We must maintain this impetus.

Two elements are basic to any solution to the arms race. They are, first, the eradication of the causes of fear and, second, the encouragement of international stability. These will inevitably lead to a growth in international confidence. No single country can introduce confidence-building measures independently. Australia, like other middle Powers, is in no position to decide global issues of war and peace. Collectively, however, we can do much to foster an international climate more conducive to arms control and disarmament. It is within the framework of multilateral negotiations on arms control and disarmament measures that individual countries, bringing their own particular perspectives to bear, may be able to make original contributions. We would greatly welcome the participation of the People's Republic of China which, as a nuclear-weapon State, has a particularly valuable contribution to make.

Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in this Committee -- an opportunity which affords closer involvement in the elaboration of practical measures to restrict the growth in armaments, both nuclear and conventional.

Practical measures directed to the avoidance of nuclear conflict must have a high priority for this Committee. The strong opposition of successive Australian Governments to the escalation of the nuclear arms race and to the spread of nuclear weapons is well known. We are committed to the continuing negotiation of measures to limit the production, distribution and use of these weapons. The problems involved are complex and difficult, and we recognize that there are no easy or quick solutions. In particular, the reduction of nuclear arsenals must ensure a stable strategic balance and thus the maintenance of international confidence.

At the same time, we need to remember that progress in the control of nuclear arms must always be related to similar progress in restricting conventional

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armaments. Given present levels of conventional arms, nuclear weapons remain an essential element in preserving the stability of the strategic balance and therefore the structure of international security.

Australia believes that the starting point for further progress in nuclear arms control should be the establishment of an international environment which will remove the motivation to possess nuclear weapons, deter their acquisition and provide non-nuclear-weapon States with security against nuclear attack. Our efforts need to embrace:

- substantial limitations and subsequent reductions in existing nuclear arsenals;
- the complete cessation of nuclear weapons testing in all environments;
- the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons to countries not yet possessing them;
- measures to ensure that the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes does not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons;
- the cessation of the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons purposes;
- satisfactory security assurances for non-nuclear weapon States; and
- confidence-building measures which will limit the danger of nuclear war through miscalculation or the failure of communication.

There has already been some progress in a number of these areas. Unless, however, we pursue the process of nuclear arms control on a broad front, covering both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the problem, there is a danger that progress in one area may be retarded by lack of momentum in another.

Of the matters facing this Committee, the elaboration of a treaty prohibiting nuclear-weapon testing in all environments is of primary importance and deserves the earliest attention. The United Nations General Assembly expressed in December its sincere hope that the negotiating Powers would present a CTB agreement to the Committee by the time it began its deliberations. It is to be regretted that this has not been possible. The negotiating Powers should be urged to do their utmost to ensure that a CTB text is presented to the Committee during this first session.

Even before the agreement is presented here, Australia believes the Committee could begin addressing the technical and operational aspects of an international seismic detection network, the study of which was initiated by the Committee's

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predecessor. A full experimental exercise of the proposed network should proceed without delay. This is essential if there is to be any possibility that an international verification system is to be operational by the time the Committee has completed its work in the drafting of a multilateral CTB treaty.

A widely accepted CTB treaty will be a significant milestone in arms control and disarmament efforts. It will be a barrier to both the spread of nuclear weapons and the expansion of existing nuclear arsenals. It will contribute to a greater level of confidence among States in all regions of the world. It will also provide the opportunity for building further upon international verification procedures of the kind incorporated in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Looking beyond the CTB, as part of the effort to enhance further the restraints on both the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Committee could profitably turn its attention to the proposal for an agreement halting the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons purposes. Such an agreement would be a further barrier to the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries by preventing the development of untested nuclear weapons. It would also place a limit on the quantity of fissionable material available to the nuclear-weapon States for weapons production and thus be an effective measure towards scaling down the nuclear arms race.

Australia does not underestimate the difficulties of implementing and verifying an international agreement of this kind. We acknowledge that it would involve the development of an adequate system of full-scope safeguards accepted by both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. Australia's own activities in the safeguards field are well known. They need no elaboration here except to say that a rigorous, comprehensive and universally applicable system of safeguards would make the non-proliferation régime even more effective. We believe that an agreement halting the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons purposes would be a substantial achievement.

I turn now to the question of measures to restrain the growth in conventional arsenals. The present high level of conventional arms expenditure is a symptom of the underlying tensions and lack of confidence which persist between States. It is conventional arms which have inflicted the suffering and destruction experienced in many parts of the world since World War II. It is also conventional

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arms which are currently absorbing such a large proportion of national budgets. If significant reductions in military expenditures could be achieved in a manner which provided countries with undiminished security at a lower level of armament, this would do much to help reduce international tensions and to assist the release of resources, both nationally and internationally, for economic and social development.

The regulation of conventional armaments and military budgets, however, raises a multitude of issues which countries perceive as directly affecting their legitimate security interests. Such regulation would need to include the negotiation of agreements for placing restrictions on the production, transfer, acquisition and use of conventional weapons. This is an area of great complexity affecting all States. It is, nevertheless, incumbent upon this Committee to take a fresh look at conventional arms control and to seek approaches which are practical, achievable and contribute to security at lower levels of armament.

The control of chemical weapons represents an aspect of conventional arms control where practical measures are immediately possible. The question of a chemical warfare convention has been under consideration in the Committee's predecessor for some years. Together with the comprehensive test-ban treaty, this is an immediate task for the Committee. It is a complex issue and one which will take up a considerable amount of the Committee's time. Nevertheless, all nations represented here which are parties to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention have undertaken in the terms of article IX of that Convention to reach early agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and for the destruction of present stocks. We are also enjoined by the Biological Weapons Convention to negotiate appropriate measures concerning equipment and means of delivery specifically designed for the production or use of chemical agents for weapons purposes. Australia regards this as an urgent matter. Chemical weapons remain the principal category of weapons of mass destruction still to be subject to a régime of control. A chemical weapons convention would be a logical extension to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

A chemical weapons convention ought to be comprehensive in its framework and cover specified chemical agents. Its application would need to be gradual but we

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I believe there would be merit in spelling out the time-frame in the convention.

Nevertheless, such a convention will only be as good as the verification procedures written into it. It is essential, I believe, that these should involve an exchange of information about chemical weapons stocks and manufacture of substances, consultations and, above all, on-site inspection to certify not only the destruction of stocks, but also that proscribed chemicals are not being manufactured by units producing similar chemical substances.

The Committee's predecessor achieved a good deal in this area. Further substantial progress, however, must await the joint initiative promised in 1976 by the United States and the Soviet Union. It would be helpful if those countries were to conclude their negotiations as soon as possible, so that we may have the negotiating text of a chemical weapons convention in this Committee this year.

This Committee on Disarmament assumes today its place as the principal multilateral negotiating body on arms control and disarmament issues. There remains an important and in some cases essential role for bilateral or regional negotiations on disarmament questions. This Committee, however, which has a more representative membership than its predecessor, should have a central role in the achievement of the objectives of arms control and disarmament set down by the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament in its Final Document and of progress towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The Committee will need to adopt a rigorous work programme. While taking advantage of the experience of its predecessor, it might look beyond the established and yet-to-be-completed arms control agenda and seek out new initiatives and solutions.

We must seize every opportunity to stem and if possible reverse the steadily mounting worldwide build-up and costs of ever more lethal arms, both conventional and nuclear. Albert Einstein's words remain true.

"We must never relax our efforts to arouse in the people of the world, and especially in their Governments, an awareness of the unprecedented disaster which they are absolutely certain to bring on themselves unless there is a fundamental change in their attitudes towards one another as well as in their concept of the future. The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking."

Mr. BLIX (Sweden): In 1962 I participated in the start of the work of the ENDC. The approach to the disarmament work was bolder then than now. General and complete disarmament, which continues to be the final goal, was then seen as the immediate object of negotiation. Other and more specific tasks were grouped together under the headline of "collateral" measures.

It was not long, however, before the formidable difficulties in tackling the problem of general and complete disarmament led ENDC to focus on specific areas. The "collateral" measures became the main object of negotiations. To our disappointment, even the drastically lowered ambitions have proved immensely difficult to fulfil. Some results have been registered, but it is sad to note that items which were before us in 1962 are still before us -- unresolved. This is notably true of a complete test ban. It would be discouraging, indeed, if that issue were not solved in the course of this year.

I need not elaborate on the grave consequences of these failures, on the direct military and political risks connected with the bulging stocks of arms, on the staggering waste of scarce resources badly needed to satisfy human needs. But I would like to dwell, for a moment, on the reasons for the failures. Let me say, at the outset, that I do not think they are found in a lack of will to attain results. Nor do I think that the military-industrial complexes are a decisive obstacle, although their vested interests no doubt play a role. By far the most important factor, I think, is the lack of confidence between blocs and States. For this problem there are, I fear, only long term remedies. Deepening of détente does not flow from declarations alone. Confidence comes from consistent conduct by States, especially the big military Powers. From respect for agreements, pledges and international norms. From responsible action in all fields of frictions. From unilateral restraint to avoid prompting responses. From a readiness to turn to negotiations. In the long run better behaviour all around will produce a climate of confidence. In such a climate much can be attained that is impossible in an atmosphere of distrust.

(Mr. Blix, Sweden)

We cannot, however, content ourselves with hopes for the future. We must seek disarmament even in the climate such as it is today. And we know that just as confidence can facilitate disarmament, so can disarmament measures promote confidence.

It is natural that we look at the various fora in which disarmament is negotiated. It is striking that different parts of one and the same process -- the disarmament process -- are considered in different fora by different methods and according to different time schedules. A serious consequence is that the coverage is incomplete. It is particularly serious that the qualitative arms race largely escapes the terms of reference of some negotiations.

On this occasion the Swedish Government wishes to express its hopes for a successful work in the Committee. We welcome the presence of the new members. With their assistance we must jointly work to create the credibility of this body as our negotiating instrument.

Both the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and the subsequent thirty-third session of the General Assembly have requested the CD to negotiate a number of specific disarmament measures. I should, however, underline that in addition to these requests the CD must in principle be allowed, even obliged, to discuss the disarmament problem comprehensively. Indeed, as I recalled at the outset, the first task of negotiation was general and complete disarmament. Thus, in our view the CD must in principle always be able to initiate or resume negotiations in areas where the CCD was involved or in other areas where it appears justified for generally agreed reasons. My Government hopes that the rule of consensus will be applied so as to admit such a procedure whenever practical results can thereby be hoped for.

I should like to dwell for a moment on some further comments on this new body. Last year's special session of the General Assembly marked the beginning of a new phase of the efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. A number of countries became more actively involved in the disarmament efforts and an extensive plan of action was worked out in consensus at the session. An important object of the deliberations where concrete results were reached was

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the new negotiating body that would be the main instrument to implement the plan of action. The multilateral negotiations now make a new start with an enlarged membership and with new rules of procedure which we hope will make the body a more efficient tool for disarmament efforts.

The organizational change reflects also the responsibility which we all have to contribute to substantial results. Indeed, the risks to which the arms race exposes so many countries give them all a right and a duty to voice their concern, irrespectively of military strength. The growing interdependence between nations and regions restricts the possibilities of States to act without affecting other countries. This is dangerously true in the arms race situation, where any miscalculated action can ignite much worse things than powder kegs.

The global interdependence which subjects us to the dangers of sparks anywhere and gives us all a legitimate interest in the disarmament talks has also made the East-West imprint less dominant. The perspective is broadened. One new dimension is the relationship between disarmament and development, which will be studied as decided by the special session. Indeed, the Group of Governmental Experts is at present working on this matter in another room of this very building. It is the hope of the Swedish Government that the work will lead to concrete recommendations which will benefit the developing countries, as envisaged in the Nordic proposal and in the decision of the General Assembly.

The legitimate concern that all States have in the disarmament process does not negate the special responsibility of the leading military Powers. The General Assembly at its special session on disarmament unequivocally placed it upon them. Indeed, they are the ones who have the most to disarm. Today the outlays for military purposes of the two military alliances constitute around 70 per cent of the world total annual expenditures for such purposes. The United States and the Soviet Union alone stand for 60 per cent. Various international estimates indicate that, in the case of the United States, around 6 per cent of the gross national product go to military purposes and 0.22 per cent to foreign assistance. In the case of the Soviet Union,

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11-13 per cent of the GNP are estimated to go to military purposes, while the percentage of GNP devoted to foreign assistance is estimated to be much lower than that of the United States. At the same time the developing countries' share of world military outlays has increased from 6 to around 14 per cent in ten years.

The CD inaugurates its work in a complex situation of arms build-up. Some of the most worrisome problems relate to the qualitative military build-up. They are gradually changing the prospects and character of disarmament work. New weapons, which are more difficult to detect, challenge the possibilities of verification and could narrow the margins of confidence in disarmament agreements. The development of new models and new types of nuclear weapons and launchers, as well as their deployment in sensitive regions, is deeply worrying. Other problems relate more specifically to the ongoing upgrading of the conventional capabilities of both military blocs. Further on, the risks of an extension of the arms race to the outer space seem acute, despite the fact that the clearly stated aim of the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 is that outer space remains a domain of peaceful development. And the arms race in the oceans is taking new and tension building dimensions. The problems are thus piling up. What is done?

For a considerable time the international community has been following the attempts by the leading military Powers and blocs to agree bilaterally and regionally on reductions of their respective nuclear and conventional capabilities. SALT, the Vienna talks and the Soviet-United States discussions on the issue of conventional arms sales are some prominent examples. These attempts, which have so far led to little progress, focus to a considerable degree on quantitative aspects. However, qualitative aspects relating to new weapons technology are often decisive for the final results.

Nuclear disarmament is the highest priority on the international agenda. The SALT negotiations occupy a key role in the détente efforts. Even if a SALT II treaty will not entail substantial reductions of arsenals and qualitative restraints, we have no doubt that it will be of great significance.

(Mr. Blix, Sweden)

It is vital that the negotiating process continues in respect of the strategic arsenals both in order to create confidence and to reach more decisive results. That is why my Government stresses that a SALT II treaty must be followed speedily by a substantial SALT III agreement. Progress in this field is of undisputed importance in its own right. It has also a direct influence on the attempts to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons.

A comprehensive ban on all nuclear-weapon tests has been the highest priority item on the agenda of the CCD for a long time. The Swedish Government is deeply disappointed that it was not possible for the three negotiating nuclear-weapon States to conclude their negotiations so as to make it possible for the CCD even to initiate negotiations on a treaty. Only a few weeks ago the United Nations General Assembly again made urgent appeals to the three States to expedite their negotiations. In two different resolutions, which were both adopted by very large majorities, the General Assembly called upon the three States to submit the draft of such a treaty to the CD at the beginning of this first session. The Swedish Government has over the years made frequent appeals in the same direction, recently with increased emphasis. We know that many other States have made similar efforts. It has many times been stressed from the Swedish side that a CTBT constitutes no disarmament measure. It would, however, be highly instrumental in the efforts to prevent further qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. It would thus contribute substantially to the curbing of the nuclear arms race, hopefully initiating its reversal. It would create confidence that the present nuclear arms race may not be slipping completely out of control. A CTBT would also be of a great importance for the efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. If it is confirmed that further postponement cannot be avoided in the trilateral negotiations I suggest that the three Powers give the members of the Committee a full account of the remaining difficulties.

In my view international attention will be increasingly focused in the coming years on three different aspects of the present arms race and disarmament efforts.

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The first aspect is the planning, testing, production and deployment of new weapons.

The second aspect is the ongoing negotiations concerning weapons and weapons systems already deployed or close to deployment.

The third aspect regards the possible inclusion in negotiations of weapons and weapons systems which have so far not been included.

As regards the first aspect, the gravity of the present situation makes it natural to expect the leading military Powers to make efforts to reorient their military research and development to projects which lend themselves more easily to arms control and disarmament. A natural element of such an effort could be to introduce administrative practices whereby the possible effects on the arms race and disarmament efforts are analysed, whenever important weapon decisions are made -- that is when projects are defined, researchers enlisted, production decisions are taken and deployment measures envisaged.

The CD could be useful in the same context by calling attention to the dangers of early military applications of scientific advances. Whenever scientific discoveries of indisputable relevance occur and there is reasonable ground for fears that they will be used for military purposes, it seems natural that this Committee should be able to discuss the issue.

Let me then make a few general remarks in relation to the second aspect, the assessment of ongoing negotiations. The CD should, in my view, have an overview of their progress or lack of progress. It should be especially attentive to a continued build-up of military capacities.

The mutual concessions which the leading military Powers must make globally or in sensitive regions, in order to reach substantial negotiated results, might have to be of different types and might have to be made in different fora. The strategic and geographic positions, political systems and alliance patterns of the two leading Powers and the military blocs differ considerably. So do often the solutions they choose to their specific defence planning problems. Although I have been stressing the qualitative side of armaments, it is evident

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that quantitative factors in respect of military forces necessarily build and sustain tension as well as qualitative factors. The operational capacity of military forces is a combination of both. In this context I wish to stress the importance of making renewed efforts to reach results in the Vienna talks on force reductions in Central Europe. Such results could considerably improve the security situation in Europe. We trust that any agreement takes due account also of the legitimate security interests of those European countries, which have not been involved in the negotiations.

The matter of verification of arms control agreements has been a stumbling block in disarmament negotiations for many years. This is true also of the ongoing negotiations. It is now widely recognized and accepted, however, that a 100 per cent assurance against covert violation of disarmament agreements is neither possible nor necessary. What is necessary and possible is adequate verification -- that is, a control system which makes the risks of discovery high enough to make it politically too risky to attempt any violations. We are convinced that, for instance, the seismic verification of a test ban can be made efficient enough to deter from clandestine violations of a CTB agreement. The CCD, and from now on the CD, Ad hoc Group of Seismic Experts, has already made considerable progress. Its goal is the designing of a suitable network of seismic monitoring stations for the surveillance of a CTBT. A key role in such a network would be played by seismic data centres. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the offer made by the Swedish Government a year ago to establish, finance and operate a seismic data centre in Sweden. I would like to add in this context that in the course of this year Sweden intends to demonstrate the main functions to be performed by such a centre.

The third aspect mentioned earlier concerns the inclusion in actual negotiations of weapons which have so far not been directly dealt with in bilateral or multilateral fora. In this context the Swedish Government has insistently focused attention on the large sectors of nuclear weapons which fall outside SALT. These are weapons which are being rapidly modernized with

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different consequences for doctrines and force dispositions. They constitute, together with strategic weapons, a growing threat to détente and involve risks of conflict by accident in situations of crisis.

It was against this background that last summer the Swedish Government formulated some suggestions in the CCD regarding nuclear weapons intended for use in Europe. We reverted to the subject at the thirty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. This is also why we made our views unmistakably clear on the neutron weapon, which apparently could be made operational by both super-Powers. One of the characteristics of the neutron weapon, which we strongly object to, is that it could lower the nuclear threshold. I wish, however, to underline that it is not only disarmament and general security policy considerations which have led my Government to formulate its reaction to the neutron weapon so explicitly and emphatically. Our reaction is also based on the humanitarian principles which protect life above objects.

The debate and the reactions provoked by the neutron weapon must not obscure the shockingly inhumane character of all nuclear weapons and their inherent purpose of mass destruction, as well as the accrued risks which the continued build-up of these weapons imply. The Swedish Government has formally put questions to the nuclear Powers of the CCD as to their future plans regarding specifically those nuclear weapons which fall outside SALT. The weapons concerned are medium and intermediate range nuclear ballistic missiles, including e.g. the SS-20, as well as tactical nuclear weapons, including the so-called mini-nukes and the neutron weapon. We welcome the fact that the United Kingdom has already presented its replies to the questions. We insist on the issue because of the particular risks which these weapons would present in a military conflict and because of the obstacles they present to détente in Europe. I express my hope that the United States and the Soviet Union will indicate their positions in respect to the same questions.

Among issues which merit increased attention is the continued arms race in the oceans and its consequences as regards the sea bed. The first Review Conference of the Sea-Bed Treaty left a legacy to the CCD to look closer

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at relevant technological developments which have taken place after the conclusion of the treaty. The CD has inherited the responsibility to fulfil this task. We therefore foresee its inclusion on the agenda of CD's future activities.

The entire issue of naval capacities and operations and the possibilities of restrictions in this domain have so far drawn very little active attention. Up to now only some sectors and aspects have been discussed and led to practical action. For instance, the number of submarine-based ballistic missiles have been restricted in SALT I. Further on the two leading military Powers made an agreement in 1972 on the prevention of incidents on and over the high seas. Confidence-building measures related to naval manoeuvres were discussed at the CSCE, but did not lead to any agreement.

As an integral part of the massive military resources of the leading Powers, naval forces must, of course, be included in any over-all assessment of the arms race situation and its implications for various negotiations.

Another important weapons sector which should be taken note of in the negotiating process comprises certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. I should like to call your attention to the United Nations conference which will take place here in Geneva on this subject in September and which will be preceded by a Preparatory Conference in March-April. This conference will present a unique opportunity to come to grips, for humanitarian reasons, with certain excessive and indiscriminate side effects of modern technology in the conventional weapons field. The main issues are quite clear. First, the conference must, in our view, agree on a ban or far-reaching restrictions on the use of incendiary weapons. No conventional weapons have been so widely condemned for their cruel effects and potential indiscriminateness as the incendiaries, particularly napalm and other flame weapons. The call which has gone out inter alia from the Heads of State of Non-aligned Countries should be heeded. We urge all States, and particularly the great Powers, to make a maximum effort to reach a far-reaching ban on the use of incendiaries.

(Mr. Blix, Sweden)

Secondly, we must take action to ensure that the new generation of the world's probably most common weapon -- the automatic rifle -- will not be so designed -- weapon and projectile -- that there is an escalation of injury as compared with the traditional 7.62 mm rifle. There is no doubt any longer that it is perfectly possible to design a high-velocity, small-calibre weapon which does not increase the wounding effects beyond presently used calibres. Manufacturers and Governments bear a heavy responsibility to see to it that present developments and designs, as well as pending procurements, will not run counter to the legitimate humanitarian concern that there be no excessively injurious rifles commissioned for national armies and defence alliances.

In other conventional weapons areas, such as those of mines and booby-traps, there seem to be good prospects for international agreement in 1979. It will be impossible, however, to qualify the projected conference as successful, unless there are tangible and workable results also in the incendiaries and small calibre weapons field.

I urge all Governments, particularly those of the great Powers and their allies, to undertake to negotiate in good faith agreements in the areas I have mentioned. The disarmament gains, properly speaking, will be limited. But the humanitarian gains would be great, indeed.

Different aspects of the arms race which I have touched upon invite a more systematic consideration of the issue of confidence-building measures. In a situation where a genuine process of disarmament is still to be embarked upon, the concept of confidence-building measures constitutes an indispensable approach in efforts to sustain and deepen détente, while in no way working as a substitute for real disarmament. We generally talk about confidence-building measures in the CSCE context. The next follow-up of the CSCE in Madrid 1980 is an important occasion to pursue further results in the confidence-building measures issue. At the same time it is clear that such measures may be very general or very specific in their character and functions. They can precede disarmament agreements and pave the way for them by enhancing détente. They can form part of them and make them more complete. They may even become the main substance of an agreement, if the initial disarmament purpose cannot be immediately achieved.

(Mr. Blix, Sweden)

The United Nations special session on disarmament and the thirty-third session of the General Assembly have seen the presentation of several initiatives which focus attention on this issue. At the same time they underline the importance of exploring regional solutions to arms race problems. Such regional approaches, which can take the characteristics of each situation into account has the full support of my Government. Latin American experiences and initiatives are widely known and of great interest in this regard. The Belgian proposal for a comprehensive study of all the aspects of regional disarmament has also rightly attracted substantial support in the General Assembly. I would also like to note that one of the French proposals at the special session focuses on regional confidence-building measures.

The CSCE led to some specific agreements on confidence-building measures regarding prior notification of military manoeuvres and exchange of observers. The Swedish Government has already indicated its view that further progress on this road is both needed and possible. One of several possibilities could be restrictions regarding such military manoeuvres and movements which could easily create concern or give rise to speculations.

I would argue that a broad outlook should inspire confidence-building efforts in the various fora, including the CD. Restrictions on movements of the most threatening concentrations of military forces appear increasingly logical. I am now thinking of the European scene. Such restrictions could counterbalance the gradually increased capacity of military forces in this region of the world. In principle such restrictions may concern troops or armaments or both. Conventional, chemical, nuclear or others. It has to be kept in mind, however, that the tension-building effects of weapons do not depend exclusively on the actual deployment of troops or their movements. Again a European illustration is the presence, quantity, and continuous upgrading and deployment in sensitive regions of short-range and medium-range nuclear weapons. Confidence can only be built by clear evidence of restraints in deployment of these weapons and by successful efforts to integrate them in a concrete negotiating process leading to comprehensive disarmament measures.

(Mr. Blix, Sweden)

Another example of the importance of restraint has regard to chemical weapons. These weapons represent a potential threat. Their tension-building effect is accentuated by the fact that they can be rapidly assembled. Here we are faced with a military capacity which can be prepared in advance and made operative at relatively short notice.

Worried voices can be heard in the international debate. They make us aware of the possibility that chemical weapons have already been deployed. The legal threshold against the use of chemical weapons, represented by the ban contained in the Geneva Protocol of 1925, must not be undermined. The temptation to use these terrible weapons would be much less significant if different steps of practical preparation for their possible use are not taken. Inhibitions should be strengthened and not undermined. It is imperative to heed the annual resolutions by the United Nations General Assembly urging the CD to give the question of chemical weapons high priority. The CD, therefore, inherits a heavy responsibility to complete at last the work on a CW convention. Even in the absence of such a convention there should be restraints in the planning, organizing and training for a chemical warfare capability. Restrictions on training should in our view also be included in a convention. Such restrictions would have to take account, of course, of the necessity that preparations for protective purposes be allowed under a CW convention.

Let me conclude where I started and underline the role of confidence-building measures as an integral part of the disarmament work. They are equally vital in the short-term and in the long-term perspective. Concrete disarmament measures must be pursued -- and may be achieved -- even in a climate of considerable distrust. But results are more likely to emerge -- and to endure in a climate of confidence. Our task in this Committee is to spare no efforts in carrying on the work performed by the CCD. This should be done both by measures which build confidence and by finally concluding tangible disarmament agreements. The important legacy left to us by the special session in its programme of action should inspire and direct these efforts.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Mr. Chairman, the Soviet delegation associates itself with the congratulations and good wishes which have already been extended to you. An honourable and responsible task has fallen to you, Mr. Chairman, the task of starting the work of the enlarged Committee on Disarmament. We extend our greetings to the Foreign Ministers who have come for the opening of the session, as well as to all other distinguished representatives. We wish all of them success in solving the complicated problems facing the Committee on Disarmament.

We attach great importance to the fact that for the first time France is taking part in the work of the multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. We are gratified that Cuba, Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Indonesia, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Venezuela have become members of the Committee.

A message of greetings to the Committee on Disarmament has been sent by L.I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. May I read out the text of this message.

"To the Committee on Disarmament, Geneva"

"As the enlarged Committee on Disarmament begins its work I extend greetings to all of its participants and wish them success in solving the complex problems before this, the main forum for multilateral negotiations on ending the arms race and achieving disarmament.

"The time has come for States and peoples, and for statesmen, who bear responsibility for the lives and well-being of their countries, to realize fully the real meaning of the alternative with which mankind is now confronted: either the arms race will be stopped and reversed -- and then peaceful principles will, at last assert themselves irrevocably in inter-State relations -- or the course of events will again lead to dangerous balancing on the brink of war, with all the attendant adverse consequences for the relaxation of tension, for normalization of inter-State relations and for the solution of world economic problems. There can be only one choice here: the efforts to bring about a decisive turn in the struggle to stop the arms race must be doubled, trebled, increased ten-fold.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

"A major role in this great undertaking belongs to the Committee on Disarmament. Its agenda includes such fundamental questions as nuclear disarmament measures; complete and general cessation of nuclear weapon tests; prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons; prohibition of the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction, including neutron weapons; reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments; reduction of military budgets. It would be no exaggeration to say that the future of all peoples and the future course of world history largely depend on the solution of these questions.

"Over the years of its activities the Committee on Disarmament has had much experience of thorough and comprehensive consideration of extremely complex problems, as well as of the preparation and negotiation of multilateral agreements, which have limited the arms race in certain areas. This experience must be put to good use.

"This year the Committee on Disarmament is beginning its work on a more representative basis: it includes States, nuclear and non-nuclear, in different continents, in different regions of the world, members of military alliances and non-aligned countries. This broadens opportunities for a comparison of views on concrete questions to be considered by the Committee, for bringing out constructive ideas, for selecting proposals conducive to progress in the matter of stopping the arms race. These opportunities must also be used fully.

"The Soviet Union intends to do everything it can to make the work of the Committee on Disarmament a success. The series of proposals for stopping the arms race, which we submitted at last year's United Nations General Assembly special session devoted to disarmament, and then at the thirty-third regular session of the General Assembly, is known to all. In the Moscow Declaration of 23 November 1978, the Soviet Union, together with other socialist member countries of the Warsaw Treaty, once more appealed for quicker progress in solving the principal problems of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. We have worked and will continue to work most actively and with a sense of purpose in this direction.

"In conveying to the Committee on Disarmament my good wishes for success, I express the hope that 1979 will see its activities produce the practical results which are awaited by all nations of the world and on which people in all parts of the globe are pinning their hopes for a more durable and lasting peace.

L. BREZHNEV."

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Mr. Chairman, what is needed now as never before is decisive progress in the direction of curtailing the arms race, releasing the vast material resources which are spent on it and converting them to peaceful creative purposes. For achieving this, there are favourable prerequisites. We see them above all in the fact that, as was manifested at the special session devoted to disarmament and at the thirty-third regular session of the United Nations General Assembly, the overwhelming majority of States attach primary importance to the solution of the problem of disarmament.

Unfortunately, however, one has to take into consideration the fact that there is also another tendency -- a tendency to continue building up armaments on far-fetched and artificial pretexts.

In conditions in which these opposing tendencies are confronting one another, purposeful efforts by all States, large and small, and their creative and constructive co-operation in the field of disarmament acquire special significance. The Committee on Disarmament is called upon to play an important role in this matter. Whether the world will be able to break loose from the arms race which has engulfed it, or will slide further down the armaments accumulation slope, will depend largely on this.

We would like to remind you that the Soviet Union, unswervingly following the course of peace and putting into practice the programme for the struggle for peace and international co-operation, and for the freedom and independence of peoples put forward by the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, has made an extensive series of proposals in the field of disarmament. They were formulated and substantiated in the document entitled "Practical measures for ending the arms race: proposals of the Soviet Union", submitted by the USSR to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly. Some of these proposals were developed at the thirty-third session of the Assembly.

We are gratified that these proposals and initiatives, which cover practically all the main aspects of the problem of disarmament, have met with extensive international support and have been reflected in United Nations decisions. Together with the constructive ideas and proposals of other States aimed at the adoption of effective measures in the field of military détente, they form the necessary basis for solving an extremely important task of international politics in the present-day conditions -- the task of bringing about a speedy and decisive breakthrough in solving disarmament questions.

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries have also made important proposals on disarmament questions at the Vienna talks on the mutual reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, and at the Belgrade Conference on Co-operation and Security in Europe. A meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty has recently been held in Moscow. In the Declaration adopted at this meeting, the participants confirmed that there is no type of weapon which they would not be ready to limit or reduce on the basis of strict observance of the principle of not impairing the security of any country.

What, in our view, is the content of the forthcoming work of the Committee on Disarmament?

It is generally recognized that task number one in the field of disarmament is the task of taking all necessary measures to limit the nuclear arms race and achieve nuclear disarmament. It is precisely for this reason that priority consideration of nuclear disarmament measures has been and still is the guiding principle in the work of the Committee on Disarmament. Now, when already four out of the five nuclear Powers are directly taking part in the work of the Committee on Disarmament, this area of its activities acquires even greater practical importance.

Given the readiness of all nuclear Powers members of the Committee to solve questions of nuclear disarmament, the consideration of these questions in the Committee can henceforth be more comprehensive and substantial -- though it should not, of course, be forgotten that decisions taken in this area, be it in the Committee on Disarmament or in another forum, can be of real value only when all nuclear Powers without exception participate in the decision making. We would like to hope that the time will come when the leaders of the People's Republic of China will abandon their negativist position on questions of disarmament and, in a constructive spirit, will take part in business-like negotiations.

The solution of the cardinal problem of nuclear disarmament is far from being easy, it requires especially great efforts and persistence. However, this problem can be solved, and we cannot evade it. There is no other reasonable

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

alternative. Guided by these considerations, the Soviet Union has recently made a proposal for the practical preparation of negotiations on ending the production of all types of nuclear weapons and gradually reducing stockpiles of such weapons until they have been completely destroyed.

The special session of the United Nations observed that "the achievement of nuclear disarmament will require urgent negotiation" (paragraph 50 of the Final Document). In one of its resolutions, the thirty-third session of the General Assembly also pointed to the need for "an early initiation of urgent negotiations on the halting of the nuclear arms race". We believe that the time has come to get down to business.

At present it is necessary, first of all, to hold consultations concerning the practical initiation of negotiations of this kind, for which purpose the Committee on Disarmament, as we see it, is an appropriate body. In the course of such preparatory consultations, it would be necessary to solve questions connected with the organizational aspect of the negotiations, and to consider alternative methods of preparing for them and conducting them. We believe that consultations of this kind should be held already during the current session of the Committee on Disarmament, with a view to starting substantive negotiations already in 1979.

Clearly, the subject of the negotiations should be specifically outlined. The subject of negotiations, we believe, should be the cessation of the production of all types of nuclear weapons, covering the cessation of the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons; the cessation of the production of their components, including fissionable materials for military purposes and means of delivery; the gradual reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their elimination.

Naturally, the implementation of measures in the field of nuclear disarmament should go hand in hand with the adoption of international political and legal measures for strengthening the security of all States.

The Soviet delegation has some other considerations on this question which it intends to submit to the Committee on Disarmament in the form of a special document at a later stage. We believe that, in the agenda which we are to elaborate, nuclear disarmament should occupy the main place.

(Mr. Israelyan, USSR)

Obviously, consideration of the question of the strengthening of guarantees of the security of non-nuclear States should be an important item in the work of the Committee on Disarmament. As is known, the thirty-third session of the General Assembly recommended the Committee on Disarmament to consider all proposals and suggestions concerning effective political and legal measures at the international level to give the non-nuclear-weapon States guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The work of the Committee on Disarmament in this area could, from the very beginning, be of a concrete nature. When making its proposal at the United Nations General Assembly, the Soviet Union simultaneously submitted a draft international convention on the subject. The Soviet delegation suggests that provision should be made in the time-table of the current session of the Committee on Disarmament for the discussion of this question.

One of the important tasks of the Committee on Disarmament, is still the elaboration of measures for the prohibition of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. On one particular aspect of this question -- the prohibition of radiological weapons -- bilateral negotiations will be resumed in the near future. However, we would like to emphasize once more that the prohibition of one or another new variety of weapon of mass destruction, as each variety is identified, is not in itself enough. It does not provide any guarantees against the continuation of the never-ending chase after super-weapons, against the spending of an ever-increasing proportion of intellectual and financial resources for these unproductive and dangerous purposes, or against the maintenance of distrust between States which is engendered by this kind of competition. The objective should be to put an end altogether to any projects in this area; and, to achieve this, it is necessary to conclude a comprehensive agreement on the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction. In this connexion, the Soviet delegation would like to draw the attention of the Committee on Disarmament

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

to the request made by the thirty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly that the Committee should actively continue negotiations, with the assistance of qualified experts, with a view to agreeing on the text of such an agreement.

In March 1978, the socialist States submitted for the consideration of the Committee on Disarmament a draft convention on the prohibition of the production, stockpiling, deployment and use of nuclear neutron weapons. We believe that consideration of this draft should be continued.

Other questions of great importance are still the problem of a general and complete cessation of nuclear-weapon tests, and the problem of the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. They require a solution without delay, and the efforts of the Soviet Union in the relevant negotiations are directed precisely towards this goal.

The Soviet delegation has dwelt only on the questions which it considers to be most important, and for the solution of which the Committee on Disarmament will have to work in the immediate future. The scope of the work to be accomplished in the Committee is very broad. In these conditions it is important to ensure that the procedure of the Committee, which it is to adopt, will help to increase its capacity for work and its effectiveness. The basis for these rules was agreed upon at the special session devoted to disarmament. We believe that questions of procedure should not be overestimated and should not take too much of the Committee's time; they should be solved as soon as possible so that the Committee can successfully start the consideration of questions of substance.

The Soviet Union is ready to do everything in its power to ensure that the Committee on Disarmament fulfils its purpose, justifies the hopes which the international community places on it and actively contributes -- by elaborating appropriate measures -- to the limitation and elimination of the material basis of war. I may assure you that any constructive proposals in this direction will meet with the most positive response from the Soviet delegation. Other delegations may count on active co-operation from our side.

Lord GORONWY-ROBERTS (United Kingdom): I am particularly glad to be present at the first meeting of the Committee on Disarmament.

I salute my colleagues from the old Committee whose faces I recognize around this table. I offer warm greetings to the new participants who are appearing here for the first time, including the distinguished representative of France, whose country made such a constructive contribution to discussion of disarmament in 1978. I hope it will not be long before the People's Republic of China takes its seat in this Committee.

For my Government, the opening of the Committee on Disarmament is an important occasion. It is appropriate that the Committee is starting its work at the beginning of a year in which we all hope to see major successes in arms control. We hope that this international negotiating body will be invigorated by the reforms which were agreed at the time of the special session and endorsed by almost every Government in the world. Britain was glad to play a central role in the negotiation of those reforms. We should now concentrate on substance and not seek prematurely to change our charter yet again. It is vital that this Committee should grasp the opportunities, and capitalize on the spirit of consensus which emerged from the special session. Above all, we must show the political will to reconcile national interests with the cause of international peace and security on which the future of the world depends.

National security is a complex matter. Those who seek to preserve it only by means of armed defence are naive and unambitious. My Government takes the view that a fundamental objective of foreign policy is to build greater security by developing co-operation and understanding between States. Our aim is to lower mutual suspicion and remove or at least reduce potential causes of conflict. Carefully prepared and balanced agreements to control and reduce arms and forces can contribute significantly to the strengthening of national and international security, and also offer the possibility of directing resources to social and economic purposes. But arms control enhances security only if it is credible -- if the States concerned are confident that the treaties are being observed. Hence the overriding importance of verification. The British Prime Minister at the special session pledged my country to accept the necessary measures to verify our compliance with arms control agreements.

(Lord Coronwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

The distinctive feature of this Committee is that it is a place intended for negotiation of agreements. It is not a forum for statements of general aspiration or a place for Governments to launch appeals for others to abandon arms which they themselves do not possess or need. It should be a body where Governments work out legally-binding commitments on specific measures of arms control and disarmament. The Committee should consciously build up the expertise required for detailed negotiation on technical matters. My Government will spare no effort to contribute to the process of informed negotiation.

One task of this Committee will be to work on a comprehensive negotiating programme for disarmament, building on the programme of action agreed at the special session. We need to agree on the disarmament subjects to be considered here and the order in which they should be tackled. I am aware that the United Nations Disarmament Commission will be considering elements in a comprehensive programme when it meets in May. But I see no conflict between discussions in the deliberative body of the whole United Nations membership, where the views of all can be directly expressed, and work by experts in this smaller committee where the actual negotiations take place. I see this as a useful task in preparing the path towards general and complete disarmament, which remains our ultimate goal.

There may be some who call for instant general and complete disarmament. But the final document of the special session recognizes that progress towards this objective must take place in the context of undiminished security for all the nations concerned. I know how frustration and impatience can build up at the apparently slow pace of disarmament: but hastily and poorly conceived measures would be destabilizing and it must be recognized that formidable problems exist in many areas. The right answer is to press ahead as fast as we can without dangerous side-effects. We must reach agreement on important matters and move on to more important ones, placing the bricks one by one in the edifice of peace.

I will discuss now some of the measures on the way to general and complete disarmament on which this Committee will have a role to play.

(Lord Goronwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

A comprehensive test-ban treaty is one of the most important items on the international agenda. This Committee has inherited notable expertise: the Ad Hoc Committee of Scientific Experts has done valuable work on a system for the international exchange of seismic data, which will be an important feature among the measures of verification in a comprehensive test-ban treaty. I believe the Ad Hoc Committee will continue to play a key role, especially in the trial and establishment of the seismic exchange.

My Government is making strenuous efforts to achieve success in our negotiations here in Geneva with the Soviet Union and the United States. Good progress has been made. Tripartite agreement in principle has been reached on most of the major issues, and we hope quickly to resolve the outstanding ones. Our aim is a multilateral treaty banning nuclear tests in any environment, and containing verification provisions which would give maximum confidence that parties were complying with their obligations. It is agreed that peaceful nuclear explosions should be covered in a protocol integral to the treaty.

Such a treaty would curb the development of new types of nuclear weapons. We hope that by demonstrating in this way that the nuclear Powers are prepared to accept self-restraint, we can attract the adherence of non-nuclear weapon States, aligned, neutral and non-aligned. The treaty which we envisage would be entirely non-discriminatory in its effect. The widest possible international adherence to it would further the objective, endorsed at the special session, of curbing vertical and horizontal proliferation. It would be a landmark in arms control.

Another priority task is the negotiation of a ban on the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons. The draft convention which my Government tabled here in 1976 served as a focus of discussion in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. Important steps have since been taken towards overcoming two of the main problems of chemical disarmament -- the scope of the intended ban and means of defining the agents to be prohibited. But verification remains the key, since even a small chemical factory would be capable of producing weapons of high toxicity. We welcome the agreement of the Soviet Union and the United States that verification should be based on a combination of national and international arrangements. We hope that their discussions will continue intensively so that the Committee on Disarmament can soon negotiate a treaty.

(Lord Gorenwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

It would meanwhile be valuable to gain practical experience of ways of ensuring that production of chemical weapons had ceased and was not taking place clandestinely. Following the lead given by the Federal Republic of Germany last year, my Government now invites relevant experts from the member States of this Committee to make a visit from 14 to 16 March to certain establishments in the United Kingdom. The group of experts would visit a commercial plant currently producing phosphorus compounds. We would demonstrate there a type of inspection which we believe would be efficient in ensuring that chemical weapons were not being produced, and at the same time would not prejudice commercial secrets. The group would also visit the site of a former pilot plant for producing chemical warfare agents, now in process of demolition, in line with Britain's renunciation of offensive chemical weapons. The purpose of this visit would be to show how an inspection can verify destruction of production facilities for chemical weapons agents. The British delegation will shortly be in touch with members of the Committee about the details of the visit.

In 1976 the United States proposed that a convention should be negotiated banning the use of radiological weapons -- the only one of the categories of weapons of mass destruction identified by the United Nations which was not already under negotiation. These are weapons which would rely for their effect on the deliberate, widespread and indiscriminate dispersal of highly radioactive materials. United States/Soviet talks have made good progress. A ban on such weapons would be a sensible measure and my Government hopes that the subject can soon be discussed in this Committee.

This Committee will also be continuing the consideration of ways to prevent the development of new weapons of mass destruction based on new scientific principles. I feel sure that many countries share my view that the best approach is to keep the question under careful review, and to consider the desirability of formulating separate agreements on the prohibition of any specific new weapons which may be identified. Arms control treaties must be precise if they are to be effective. Vagueness invites evasion.

(Lord Goronwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

In the nuclear field this Committee will be called upon to examine the Canadian idea for a verifiable cut-off in the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes. My Government voted for the resolution at the 1978 General Assembly. I think we all recognize that such a measure would require stringent inspection to ensure that States were not producing or diverting fissionable materials for nuclear weapons.

The Committee is also to consider ways of strengthening the security of non-nuclear weapon States from nuclear attack. Before the United Nations special session the United Kingdom stressed the advantages of the nuclear-weapon States giving appropriate negative security assurances. My Government gave such an assurance, in solemn and formal terms, at the special session. We are glad that other nuclear-weapon States have also made statements on this subject. But the various assurances are so different in character that it would be immensely difficult to fuse them into a common form of negative security assurance in an international convention. Nor do I see how a Convention would strengthen the assurance my country has given. Nevertheless we shall continue to play our part in the search for appropriate international arrangements which would help to increase the confidence of non-nuclear weapon States in their security from nuclear attack.

I should now like to turn briefly to one or two arms control issues which will be mainly dealt with outside this Committee. Two of the most notable treaties negotiated by our predecessors were the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 and the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972. As a depositary power for both, the United Kingdom launched at the 1978 General Assembly resolutions setting arrangements in hand for next year's review conferences.

We shall need to look carefully at developments in the last few years concerning the effectiveness of these treaties. In the case of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, there is a balance of obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear Powers. It is clear from the progress in the SALT and comprehensive test ban negotiations that the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty are keen to curb vertical proliferation. And the growth of peaceful nuclear technology throughout the world in the last decade is self-evident proof that the benefits of nuclear energy are being made widely

(Lord Goronwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

available, with the invaluable assistance of the International Atomic Energy Agency. There is no evidence that the acceptance of Agency safeguards has hindered any country's civil nuclear development: indeed a country which opens its nuclear industry to international inspection will be assured of the greatest possible co-operation from the countries which supply nuclear equipment, materials and technology. The International Atomic Energy Agency's dual role of encouragement of nuclear industries through technical assistance and control of nuclear proliferation through safeguards promotes a balance of advantages for all.

How to improve the transfer of technology without increasing the proliferation dangers is the subject of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation, the findings of which are expected to be published in February 1980. They will form part of the background to what we hope will be a comprehensive discussion of the whole field of non-proliferation at the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I believe the equipment and services which are needed for a successful civil nuclear industry can be made generally available under internationally acceptable arrangements.

The Biological Weapons Convention was a genuine disarmament measure, requiring the destruction of all stocks of biological weapons. The United Kingdom played an active part in its negotiation. Some concern has been expressed about developments in genetic engineering in recent years which might permit laboratory culture of new organisms dangerous to mankind and incalculable in their effects. This would be a perversion of scientific knowledge with potentially appalling consequences. My Government suggests that the Review Conference should examine such developments so that the world may be assured that none is being used for military purposes.

I turn now to the budgetary approach to arms control. The arms race is a worldwide phenomenon. At least 38 countries have military expenditure exceeding \$1 billion a year. The burden is particularly hard on the developing countries. Their military expenditure amounted to \$56.3 billion in 1976, almost three times the amount they received in development assistance, despite the continued efforts of many donors to increase their aid.

(Lord Goronwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

There has recently been progress towards negotiations on military budgets. The adoption at the United Nations General Assembly of the Swedish and Mexican resolution initiating a pilot test of the reporting instrument devised by the Secretary-General's group of experts is a useful step forward in the search for a reliable data base on military expenditure. It is, of course, disappointing that a very few States felt obliged to abstain on this resolution on the very doubtful ground that it is not necessary to measure and compare military budgets before negotiating to reduce them. I think most of us would agree that a standard form of reporting military expenditure is the only practical basis for universal, balanced and verifiable reductions. That is an attractive aim for many reasons, not least because it would have an impact over the whole spectrum of military activities.

In the search for measures of nuclear disarmament it is easy to lose sight of the stark fact that conventional weapons, in greater numbers and of increasing sophistication, are in daily use in one place or another, killing and maiming thousands of people. My Government has consistently argued for international discussion on ways to halt the build-up of conventional weapons, regionally and throughout the world. At the same time we recognize the right of States under the Charter of the United Nations to acquire arms to protect their territorial integrity. Arms control in this field should not discriminate against States which do not manufacture arms. Suppliers and recipients should participate in negotiations, starting perhaps on a regional basis.

We have also followed with great interest the talks between the two major arms suppliers -- the United States and the Soviet Union. The recent initiative by Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean States to limit the supply of arms in their area is encouraging. I hope the regional countries will agree on a common approach to a restraint régime covering a range of armaments of different kinds. I can say now that Britain will be willing to consider favourably the question of participation in discussions resulting from this initiative.

We hope also that progress will now be made in restricting conventional weapons regarded as causing unnecessary suffering or as being indiscriminate in their effects. We hope that the United Nations Conference this year will conclude

(Lord Goronwy-Roberts, United Kingdom)

conventions on all matters where there is a sufficiently broad measure of agreement. We should particularly like to see action on our proposal for a convention on the use of landmines and booby-traps, and on the Swiss proposal banning the use of weapons whose primary wounding effect is caused by fragments not detectable by x-ray. We hope that there will be agreement on a convention restricting the use of incendiary weapons, particularly napalm.

Looking back over 1978, I cannot say that we achieved all the progress which was expected in arms control and disarmament. The special session reached consensus on a programme of action and the reform of disarmament machinery: the stimulus which it gave to the disarmament discussions produced a record number of resolutions in the General Assembly. But it is concrete action that the world expects from this Committee. We must make 1979 the year of achievement, starting I hope with a second Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement between the super-Powers. We must achieve among other things a comprehensive test-ban treaty, concrete progress in the negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe and also constraints on "inhumane" weapons. My Government dedicates itself to pursue these tasks with determination and in a spirit of co-operation.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): The Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Mr. George M. Seignious II, had intended to represent the United States on this the opening day of the initial session of the Committee on Disarmament. Regrettably, this has not been possible. Mr. Seignious has asked, however, that I read you the following message from him:

"I have asked Ambassador Fisher to extend to you my most sincere wishes for the success of the Committee on Disarmament as you begin your work in which all mankind has a stake. I deeply regret that the need to remain in Washington to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as part of the process of seeking Senate confirmation of my appointment has made it impossible to be with you today as I had hoped and planned. It would have been an auspicious occasion for me to make my first speech, as Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, delivered in an international forum. I look forward to the opportunity of paying a visit to the Committee in the not-too-distant future.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

"Your concerns are the concerns shared by Governments everywhere. The ultimate goal which we all share, it seems to me, is like the objective described in the legislative act that established the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency within the United States Government. 'To seek a world which is free from the scourge of war and the dangers and burdens of armaments.' That goal should serve as a beacon to inspire all of us, no matter how difficult our task may seem at times."

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.