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Chairman: Mr. RANA (Nepal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 45 TO 66 AND 155 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. COMISSARIO (Mozambique): Sir, it is a great honour and privilege to extend to you our warmest felicitations on your unanimous election as Chairman of this very important Committee. My delegation is fully confident that under your skilful guidance our work will be successful and we shall be able to achieve the positive results that in the present favourable circumstances the world is expecting. We also extend our good wishes to the other officers of the Committee.

Forty-five years ago one of the most brutal confrontations in human history was brought to an end with the defeat of nazism and fascism in Europe. It was not long before the confrontation was replaced by the so-called cold war, which in its turn determined the international order we have known until recent times. Today, as the world enters the post-cold-war era, rivalry and tensions between the super-Powers are increasingly becoming issues of the past as they give way to co-operation and dialogue between the two. The new relationship between the United States of America and the Soviet Union has brought about positive repercussions in reshaping relations among nations based on mutual respect and increasing observance of the provisions enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

As the culmination of those processes the international community has begun to reap what has been called the peace dividend. In the current year alone we have witnessed unprecedented events involving the settlement of international issues the solutions to which had long challenged the wisdom of many statesmen and politicians. The independence of Namibia, the prospects of change in South Africa, the reunification of the two Yemens and the emergence of a single Germany are the most important events benefiting from the emergent close co-operation and mutual understanding.

The impact of rapprochement has also been translated around the world into a growing appreciation of the need to settle of disputes by peaceful means and increasing recognition of the role and authority of the United Nations.

It is with deep appreciation that we see the successful involvement of the United Nations in the efforts towards the restoration of peace and stability in different parts of the world. We note with satisfaction that in Cambodia and Western Sahara peace under United Nations auspices is within our grasp.

Despite all these encouraging developments, we still have some concerns with regard to disarmament issues, particularly the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament retains its priority in the efforts towards general and complete disarmament. The issue of nuclear weapons, which bring with them the potential of nuclear confrontation, will always remain the most controversial in the disarmament field so long as nuclear tests continue to be advocated as a necessary and important instrument in the military and strategic concepts of some countries. We find it difficult to agree with the concept of the usefulness of nuclear weapons. The motives underlying the cold war, in which the arms race, particularly in the nuclear field, was deeply rooted, seem to be subsiding

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

gradually. For that reason we are unable to see the rationale in favouring the continued improvement of that category of weapons.

In this connection, many previous speakers have pointed out the importance of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. My delegation would like to join those States in expressing its full support for the convening of a conference in 1991 to amend the 1963 partial test-ban Treaty and convert it into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We believe that a successful conference would be a milestone in efforts to achieve the eradication of nuclear weapons from the earth. We note with great approval that a decision has been taken in the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the ad hoc committee to consider the question of a comprehensive test ban.

We encourage nuclear States to declare, uniliterally or by agreement, a moratorium on all nuclear tests pending formal agreement on a nuclear-test ban. Such a declaration would undoubtedly be a first step and a major contribution towards the eventual cessation of all nuclear tests.

There is a close relationship between the need for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In my statement at the last session I had an opportunity to inform the Committee of my Government's intention to become a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I am proud to announce formally today that Mozambique did indeed accede to the Treaty on 12 September 1990. We adhered to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a peace-loving country truly committed to the ideals of peace and hoping for a world free from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. We took that decision because we truly believe that, despite its contentious status, the Treaty was worth signing because of its potential ability to contribute to peace and disarmament.

My Government has followed with keen interest the work of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty held recently at Geneva.

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

However, we noted with profound regret the fact that the Review Conference was unable to come up with consensus language for a final declaration.

This demonstrates the intricacy of problems related to world disarmament efforts at a multilateral level. It is a clear indication of the divergent views of States Parties on the basic issue of the appropriate approach to be taken for the effective attainment of the objectives for which we are striving in the nuclear disarmament field. Those differences of approach should not be underestimated, for they have very deep-rooted implications that go to the core of the future existence of the Non-Proliferation Treaty régime itself. Confidence is eroded when there is resistance to addressing some of the loopholes in the Treaty.

While we agree with and value the purpose of the Treaty, we feel that its inadequacy resides in its discriminatory nature in making it legitimate for a few Parties to continue to develop their nuclear arsenals while forbidding such development to others. It should also be noted that the Treaty has not fully succeeded in averting the proliferation of such weapons.

It is important that efforts be geared towards halting nuclear proliferation, both horizontally and vertically. Vertical non-proliferation should include not only the quantitative but also the qualitative aspects. A comprehensive test ban would effectively address this issue.

We believe it to be unrealistic to argue the validity and merits of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, on the one hand, and, on the other, to reject the idea of a comprehensive test ban. We are convinced that the early conversion of the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty would boost the confidence of States in the usefulness and practicality of the Treaty.

We welcome and commend the serious manner in which the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - signed

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

two years ago between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is being implemented. We also note with appreciation that additional agreements in the field of disarmament have been arrived at between the Soviet Union and the United States to revitalize talks on a strategic arms reduction treaty. Those agreements will further the current trend in favour of disarmament.

We attach great importance to the establishment of zones of peace and nuclear-free zones. We feel deeply encouraged by the fruitful exchange of views on those questions at the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty held at Geneva. We are convinced that the international community as a whole is moving towards a universal recognition of the positive role played in the fields of disarmament, peace and international security and stability by the creation of such zones.

However, my Government is appalled by events taking place in connection with the work on the preparation for the Conference on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, at its preparatory sessions, met with its membership reduced in number for the first time since 1983 owing to the negative attitude of some of its members. In our view this is incompatible with the prevailing political climate, which favours negotiations and the untiring search for dialogue and compromise. My delegation urges those States to reconsider their position and to work positively towards the early convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, to be held at Colombo.

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

Twenty-six years have elapsed since the adoption of the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. However, South Africa's nuclear capability continues to undermine Africa's efforts in this respect. We recall with satisfaction that the Disarmament Commission concluded last summer a set of recommendations that, inter alia, recognized the nuclear capability of South Africa.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution during its forty-fourth session requesting that an investigation be undertaken on reports that South Africa may have acquired the technical capability to develop a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile. We remain convinced that the report will make an important contribution to the clarification of the matter, which is of grave concern to the front-line States and to Africa as a whole.

We call upon South Africa to desist forthwith from further development of its nuclear capability, to place all its facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and, for that matter, to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The chain of events in South Africa has led is to look to the future with more confidence and optimism. It is our belief that a society without apartheid in South Africa will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the abandonment of nuclear-oriented policies.

Conventional disarmament is an important component of the overall disarmament process. The dramatic technological development of conventional weapons has made them no less horrendous than nuclear weapons. Once again, we note with appreciation that the Disarmament Commission was able to adopt a set of principles on conventional disarmament in its recommendations. On the other hand, important agreements are under way in Europe on conventional disarmament. We are encouraged by these initiatives, taking into account the fact that Europe remains one of the parts of the world with the largest concentration of conventional weapons and

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forces. The understandings agreed upon by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in this regard are commendable.

We strongly believe that disarmament efforts can be successful only if they are comprehensive and cover all dimensions, including that of the sea. Naval disarmament, in our view, should not be marginalized, for an arms build-up on the high seas entails the same potential threat.

My delegation totally disagrees with the notion of converting outer space into another or alternative playground for the arms race because of the existing pressure for disarmament on Earth. The consequences of an arms race in outer space transcend the scientific knowledge available today. Nuclear accidents on Earth are horrendous, but the same accidents in space would certainly result in uncontrollable consequences. The status of outer space as the common heritage of all humankind should be preserved. Its use should be directed towards peaceful exploration for the benefit of all.

After the Paris Conference held in 1989 that brought together the parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and other interested States, most of us believed that the adoption of a convention on chemical weapons was within sight. Hence, we find it disturbing that negotiations on that issue in the Conference on Disarmament are lagging. However, we still believe that efforts will be redoubled in order to allow the conclusion of a convention on the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons without delay. We share the view that a deadline should be agreed upon for the conclusion of such a convention. The bilateral agreement signed last summer between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in this field represents an achievement of particular importance.

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

Disarmament negotiations on chemical weapons are one of the most obvious illustrations one can draw to demonstrate the intrinsic relationship and complementarity existing between bilateral and multilateral efforts for disarmament. One should not be replaced with the other, for the threat posed by the current level of weapons concerns us all. That is valid for disarmament negotiations on all kinds, types and categories of weapons.

As we express our appreciation of the improvement in many areas of disarmament, and as we look with some optimism to the future, we also note the unfortunate emergence of new and non-military threats to global security and peace. I agree with the Secretary-General when he says in his report on the work of the Organization that the United Nations:

> "has to try to eliminate the seeds of war in all areas of the globe and, in so doing, squarely face the fact that new sources of conflict are emerging in our age. It has to serve as the prime instrument for extending the spirit of co-operation to those spheres - economic relations between nations and humanity's social problems - which are seemingly non-political but have profound political implications". (A/45/1, p. 3)

Problems of a social nature, such as drug trafficking and terminal diseases, and those problems of an economic nature, such as poverty, external debt and underdevelopment, together with environmental problems, constitute the real threat to mankind that the international community will have to learn to deal with. They are problems that transcend the efforts of individual States and require a global approach.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development attempted to give an answer to these new challenges. For that reason, the need for urgent implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the

(Mr. Comissario, Mozambique)

Conference becomes one the most pressing issues if we are to avoid a tragedy in the near future.

As we enter the 1990s, we believe it is high time that the First Committee take appropriate advantage of the prevailing climate in the international arena to improve its work and to approach the issues on its agenda with more realism and practicality. We believe that it remains, within its purview, the First Committee's challenge to translate the current atmosphere into concrete disarmament measures. In so doing, it will have seriously to consider ways and means of making its methods of work considerably more operative and efficient. In this connection, I should like to pledge my delegation's co-operation with you, Mr. Chairman, in those endeavours.

Mr. ZLENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of such an important body as the First Committee. At the same time, I should like to wish you success in achieving the objectives before us.

(Mr. Zlenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It is no exaggeration to say that the world community is at a truly crucial juncture in its history. New political thinking and the departure from confrontational methods in favour of constructive co-operation and the solution of international problems by political means are beginning to have their effect on relations between States. The growing awareness of the enormous danger and futility of reliance on military power in this age of missiles and nuclear arms holds out hope for achieving a new kind of peace that will be stable and lasting. Ideas which only yesterday seemed unrealistic or simply rhetorical have today become or are becoming the basis for practical actions, and are being given form in specific agreements. Even Iraq's aggression against Kuwait, an alarming relapse into an outmoded way of thinking and behaviour, has shown that times have changed: virtually all the countries of the world have resolutely condemned the aggression and united against it, calling for a just settlement of the conflict.

Like the national security of every State, global security can only be comprehensive, equal and the same for all. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly evident that genuine security cannot be achieved through an unrestrained buildup of ever more sophisticated weapons, but only through their negotiated reduction to the level of minimal sufficiency, which means enough military capability to guarantee a country's defence but not enough to launch aggression.

The process of balanced, mutual disarmament strengthens security and promotes confidence and stable co-operation. We are pleased to note that we can at last speak of an emerging concept of lasting and stable peace at progressively lower levels of military capability. We are encouraged too by the latest substantial accomplishments in this area. These are particularly important in a world still dangerously overloaded with weapons, including huge arsenals of nuclear and

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chemical weapons. Given this situation, it is essential to implement the proposal for the formulation and conclusion by all nuclear Powers of an agreement on measures to reduce the risk of nuclear war.

Today it is very important that disarmament, which has just begun, be transformed into a sustained, steadily growing and deepening global process.

The Ukrainian SSR, having solemnly proclaimed its intention to abide by non-nuclear principles in the future, is in favour of a consistent succession of concrete measures in the field of nuclear disarmament. In that connection we see the need to follow up on history's first measure of real disarmament: the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear missiles. We look forward with great expectation - which significantly increased after the fruitful talks held here in New York earlier this month between the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, and the United States Secretary of State, James Baker - to the successful completion of the Soviet-United States talks on the limitation and reduction of strategic offensive weapons. The Ukrainian SSR considers it imperative after that to continue negotiations without delay on further reductions in those weapons, leading to their complete elimination. It is necessary to maintain the momentum and move forward in a consistent and determined way to make nuclear disarmament irreversible.

As an intermediate step on the way to the final elimination of nuclear weapon, measures could be adopted and implemented to reduce nuclear stockpiles on the basis of a clear-cut concept of minimal nuclear deterrence. A comprehensive study of this complex problem would most appropriately begin with substantive consultations on the subject within the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament among highly experienced experts from all interested parties.

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A major issue on the agenda of nuclear disarmament concerns tactical nuclear weapons. It is time to extend the negotiating process to all types of these weapons, addressing first and foremost the reduction of tactical nuclear arms in Europe.

In this context, we are greatly encouraged by the stated renunciation by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) of plans to modernize its nuclear artillery and Lance missiles and its willingness to make tactical nuclear weapons in Europe a subject for negotiations. Along with the ongoing unilateral withdrawal of 500 nuclear warheads from the territories of its allies and the reduction in the European region of 140 tactical missile launchers and 3,200 nuclear-capable artillery pieces by the end of this year, those steps create favourable conditions for negotiations on tactical nuclear arsenals. The Ukrainian SSR advocates the total elimination of such weapons, including the nuclear components of dual-purpose munitions, as well as delivery systems - that is, nuclear-capable aircraft.

The immediate cessation of nuclear testing is without doubt a high priority and an issue of exceptional importance in achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons. The complete prohibition of tests would raise a solid barrier to the modernization and modification of nuclear arms and to the development of new types of these weapons, which could greatly change the balance of forces and disrupt overall stability. A number of new initiatives have already been put forward on possible ways to carry out this task, including a proposal to extend to underground tests the scope of the 1963 Moscow Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear testing in three environments, which would in fact amount to a total ban on testing. We look forward to a thorough discussion of this possibility at the upcoming 1991 Treaty review conference.

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The Soviet proposal for a mutual Soviet-United States moratorium on nuclear explosions, which could take effect at any time, has already been reiterated in this room. Such a moratorium would undoubtedly set the stage for the successful negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

Many representatives in this Committee will recall the long, well-argued and yet empty debate on which should come first: disarmament or international verification. Events have now given a clear answer: first and foremost there must be the political will to agree. Today, the 1963 Moscow Treaty, which marked a hopeful start in efforts to ban testing, is almost 30 years old. The success of the Treaty seemed to promise early agreement on a comprehensive test ban.

(Mr. Zlenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Even those who are truly familiar with the military, technological and historical aspects of this problem can have no doubt whatsoever that the continuing lack of a solution to the issue of a comprehensive test ban can be ascribed mainly to the lack of sufficient political will on the part of one nuclear Power, which has alone conducted more nuclear tests than the rest of the world put together.

Of course, we are seeing movement in the right direction, and are aware of the steps being taken towards reactivating the 1974 and 1976 threshold test-ban Treaties. On 16 October, four days after the most recent test explosion in Nevada, Mr. Ronald F. Lehman II, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, stated before this Committee that

> "the President is firm in his commitment to the step-by-step process and to a comprehensive test ban as a long-term objective of the United States". (A/C.1/PV.4 p.38, para.5)

This does not really come as news to us, as the Governments of the United States, The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union declared as long ago as 1963, in the Moscow partial test-ban Treaty, that they were seeking to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time and were determined to continue negotiations to this end. (Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, third paragraph of the preamble)

It has been 27 years since that declaration was made and seven days since the latest nuclear explosion, so we can hardly blame the world community for being impatient: it has been waiting for more than a quarter of a century for this objective to be achieved.

Although we are all living in the same world, it seems as if time runs at different rates in different places; people living next to test sites, or in cities which suffered the atom bomb, or in areas contaminated by the Chernobyl

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catastrophe quite justifiably consider a complete test ban to be an immediate rather than a long-term objective. They are quite right, and those of us on capital city time should pay close heed.

We have great hopes that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which has at last been set up by the Conference on Disarmament, will do productive work. The tasks it faces are not simple, but it is not starting from scratch: we are counting on it to work intensively - in a spirit of mutual understanding and without getting bogged down - and on all participants in the Conference, particularly the nuclear Powers, to take an active and constructive part in the work of the Committee.

The efforts to achieve a nuclear test ban and those aimed at strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation régime are closely linked. The outcome of the Fourth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in which the Ukraine participated as an observer, very clearly shows how complex the situation is and how important are measures to strengthen the non-proliferation régime.

A closely-related issue is the problem of finding means to prevent the proliferation of missiles and missile technology and of chemical and other modern weapons, along with the technology used to produce them. The more these weapons spread, the more difficult it will be to fulfil the aspiration of all nations for a real reduction in the threat of war, for enhanced security, for effective arms control and for disarmament.

The Ukrainian SSR is fully committed to the principle that the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, missiles and missile technology should be prevented. We share the view that it would be appropriate to establish an

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international mechanism within a United Nations framework to prevent the spread of the most destructive and sophisticated weapons and the technologies behind them.

The 1991 Review Conference on the bacteriological weapons Convention should be used to strengthen the Convention's régime.

The Ukrainian SSR is in favour of taking urgent steps to halt the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes. The General Assembly might wish to call for talks to begin on negotiating an international agreement to that effect as soon as possible.

Given the disarmament process which has now begun - a process which we hope will gain momentum - the moment has come to think about a serious study of the various aspects of the problem of finding means to prevent the use for military purposes of nuclear explosives released in the process of disarmament. A study of this kind could be carried out under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and draw on its expertise.

The Ukrainian SSR is consistent in its support for efforts to create nuclear-free zones and zones of peace and co-operation in various parts of the world. Zones of these kinds could stimulate the development of good-neighbourly relations, trust and friendship between nations.

The negotiations on a global, multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons and on their destruction have been going on at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for many years now. We call on all the participants in the negotiations to redouble their efforts so as to finalize the convention in 1991 and open it for signature. We think the proposal to hold a session of the Conference at the level of foreign ministers in order to overcome the remaining obstacles is a good one.

(Mr. Zlenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Regrettably, there is no encouraging news about weapons in space. Rapid scientific and technological progress and the burgeoning exploration of space, with more and more States involved, hand-in-hand with proliferating missile technology, are making the risk that space will be used for military purposes ever more serious. We must have a reliable barrier against this trend, which is fraught with possible consequences that are both extremely dangerous and also unpredictable. It is high time, in fact, for us to put together a process of specific negotiations to lead to a businesslike examination of this festering problem and find a sensible solution to it. We suggest that the General Assembly should call on the Conference on Disarmament to look at this problem more actively; it could begin, for example, by looking at confidence-building measures relating to outer space.

We are looking forward with great anticipation to the Paris summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) countries, to be held in November. One of the key items on its agenda will be the signing of a treaty on conventional forces in Europe. In fact, quite a lot has already been done; it would appear that many important elements in the treaty have been agreed.

(Mr. Zlenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Undoubtedly, this treaty will become another significant achievement reflecting the positive changes in the international climate, and will serve as an example of the practical application of the principles of the new political thinking. The conclusion of the treaty on conventional forces in Europe will play a major role in ensuring future stability and security on the continent. It will lay the groundwork for new relations in Europe and for the future European security architecture. It will also set valuable standards for curbing the arms race and moving towards disarmament in other regions of the world.

With the expected signing of the Soviet-United States START treaty and the treaty on conventional forces in Europe, the year 1990 may become a milestone in the history of disarmament. But if disarmament is to become a truly comprehensive, irreversible and global process, it must be extended to all spheres of military activity and to all types of armaments without exception. Confidence-building measures, transparency, glasnost, and verification and monitoring mechanisms should be used to their utmost in every sphere.

Of course, this also applies to naval armaments, which constitute a formidable component of modern military forces. In this regard too several specific proposals have been put forward, but business-like and constructive discussion on this matter has never even started. The Ukrainian SSR is convinced that international action should be taken without delay to find a way of extending the process of confidence-building and arms control, which is already well advanced in other areas, to the seas and to naval activities in general. This major destabilizing factor cannot remain off-limits any longer to the active disarmament efforts, which in many respects are quite productive. We are in favour of immediately starting negotiations on confidence-building measures at sea and on limiting and reducing naval activities and armaments.

(Mr. Zlenko, Ukrainian SSR)

A relatively new problem, which is attracting growing attention, has to do with the conversion of military industries and military expenditures to peaceful civilian purposes. The prospects in this area of conversion are immense, but so are the complexities involved in its sound implementation. In our view, the United Nations can play a useful role in exploring this problem, in conducting the necessary research, in working out proper recommendations and in organizing international co-operation on the subject. The Moscow Conference on conversion was one of the first steps taken in this direction. We expect the United Nations actively to address matters of conversion.

Problems of peace, disarmament, the strengthening of international security and building trust among governments and nations are at the focus of the international community's attention. The World Disarmament Campaign, organized by the United Nations, has a unique role in mobilizing world public opinion in favour of action to promote the ideas of peaceful development. The Ukrainian SSR highly appreciates these efforts of the United Nations and is providing full support for the World Disarmament Campaign, is making the appropriate contributions to its Fund and is participating in the activities it is organizing. Ukrainian non-governmental organizations are waging a broad anti-militaristic campaign, about which we regularly inform the Secretary-General. The Ukrainian SSR is prepared to continue its close co-operation with the United Nations, in particular with its Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the leadership of Mr. Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General, in the preparation and holding of various activities within the framework of the World Disarmament Campaign.

By and large, the United Nations role in the field of disarmament needs to be steadily increased. The Organization has proved its unique significance as the single world centre for harmonizing the will, positions and efforts of all States,

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above all in dealing with global universal issues. Disarmament, here, is certainly a case in point.

The idea suggested by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, in the First Committee on 16 October, to entrust the United Nations with the functions of a global centre for military openness, is worthy of implementation. States might provide the centre on a voluntary basis with data about the numerical strength of their armed forces and major armaments, including tanks, armoured vehicles and aircraft, as well as ships, submarines, nuclear missiles, launchers, and so forth. We should not forget that, while some States are implementing disarmament measures in certain areas, other States have their military production lines working to full capacity in the very same areas or in others. That is why it is essential to see the true global picture in the first place. Secondly, and even more important, disarmament must be made a net winner - in other words, the arms-reduction process in places like Europe must be prevented from being outweighed by the arms race elsewhere in the world.

We are optimistic about the future of the Disarmament Commission - in which some breakthroughs have recently been made and whose work is to be modernized on the basis of its own proposals. We see this as a welcome indication that the Commission can become a truly effective United Nations mechanism in this important area.

As the main permanent forum of multilateral disarmament negotiations, the Conference on Disarmament is undoubtedly crucial to the success of the global disarmament process. The Ukrainian SSR attaches great importance to making the work of this major forum a success and considers it a matter of urgency and vital importance to improve the efficiency of the Conference in achieving practical results.

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In our view, the Conference is to accomplish three specific aims in 1991, namely: finalizing the chemical weapons convention; putting the discussion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban on a practical plane; and proceeding to a substantive discussion of ways to prevent an arms race in outer space.

All disarmament bodies of the United Nations must take advantage of the opportunity presented by the favourable international situation which is now taking shape. They should step up their activity, make it more result-oriented and, above all, work for practical results, which is what real disarmament is all about.

Mr. TOTH (Hungary): First of all, Sir, let me add my voice to the voices of those who have expressed their satisfaction at your election to the Chair. I can assure you that my delegation will do its best to help you and your colleagues in the Bureau in the discharge of your responsible duties.

I also welcome the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, and express our appreciation to him and to the Secretariat for their highly effective performance.

Since last year's session of the First Committee of the General Assembly unprecedented changes have taken place in international relations. Those changes have perhaps been most profound in Europe, where, as a result of improved super-Power and East-West relations, a new political constellation is in the making. Countries of central and Eastern Europe have opted for replacing their societies marked by the exclusive rule of communist parties with democracies based on a free market economy. The revolutionary changes were highlighted by the recent unification of Germany, which restored to the German people full sovereignty over their State. These events give rise to further expectations related to the idea of a united Europe and provide an excellent political atmosphere for the successful conclusion of the first stage of European disarmament negotiations and for the forthcoming meeting of States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process.

If we look outside Europe, improved international relations also show their positive effect in many parts of the world. The rejuvenation and revitalization of the United Nations through international efforts is being carried further and the Organization can no longer be dismissed as being an incompetent and ineffective bureaucracy. In its primary task of maintaining international peace and security as laid down in the Charter, the United Nations has already provided evidence of able functioning. Settlements, final or partial, brought about by the active involvement of the United Nations in a number of grave regional conflicts,

(Mr. Toth, Hungary)

including the Iraq-Iran war and the situations in Namibia, central America, Afghanistan and Cambodia, represent an impressive list that needs no additional comment.

The current crisis in the Gulf has also demonstrated the international community's unanimity in standing up against such forms of aggression. Common action and the Security Council's determination to solve the crisis also shows the increased authority of this most important organ of the United Nations, no longer split by super-Power rivalry. The restoration of the sovereignty of a country that has fallen victim to aggression will be the first full-scale test of collective security through the United Nations. And, besides the primary task of peace-making and peace-keeping, the world Organization is making important efforts to meet the challenges arising from the problems of interdependence.

Improved international relations have come about along with progress in arms limitation and disarmament. Mention has already been made of the first treaty on conventional forces in Europe, which would reduce significantly the military potential for an armed conflict in Europe. Soviet-American disarmament talks have also produced results in some important fields. These include the bilateral agreement on the elimination of all but a small portion of existing chemical-weapon stockpiles and the signing of the verification protocols to be annexed to the 1974 and 1976 bilateral Treaties on nuclear testing.

There appears to be a worrying discrepancy between the positive tendencies in international politics, the progress achieved in bilateral and regional disarmament and the lack of results and perspectives with regard to multilateral disarmament. The Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was also an abortive undertaking in the sense that there was no agreement in a final document, and this added another item to the negative record of multilateral disarmament activity. It is not at all simple to analyse the

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situation and find the causes of these repeated failures. The answer cannot be a clear-cut one, putting the blame on any State or group of States. The situation is much more complex than that and so is the solution to the problems of multilateral disarmament. Indeed, it needs to be taken into account that a large number of States are unwilling to settle for a situation in which the majority of security options are the monopoly of a privileged group of countries. Yet it also has to be mentioned that the setting of over-ambitious objectives that fail to take realities into account has turned out to be one of the stumbling-blocks in disarmament activity in a multilateral framework. The sooner we realize that disarmament is an evolutionary process implying a gradual and realistic approach and seeking solutions on a stage-by-stage basis, the better will be our chances of embarking on meaningful negotiations and overcoming differences.

The problems of the functioning of multilateral disarmament forums and the situation of stalemate therein have also been recognized by the international community. As a result, some procedural measures have been taken to improve the effectiveness of those bodies, and the first positive effects of these organizational measures were reflected in the 1990 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Moreover, on the basis of the integrity of substance and form, certain alterations are a prerequisite in the substantive approach of participants as well if we are to advance the cause of multilateral disarmament.

Negotiations on a comprehensive and global ban on chemical weapons remain the most promising field of multilateral disarmament efforts. Indeed, it has often been said that negotiations on chemical weapons constitute the only item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament on which substantive work is being done. Unfortunately, here again the faltering of multilateralism can be observed. In spite of the favourable political atmosphere created by two successful

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international conferences on the subject of chemical weapons held last year, the relevant working body of the Conference on Disarmament cannot report significant achievements in this year's negotiating efforts. Here again there is a sharp contradiction in the fact that, while such conclusions have to be formulated withi the framework of multilateral activity, the two super-Powers have come to an agreement on destroying the bulk of their chemical-weapon stockpiles, with provision for total elimination once a multilateral convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons enters into the final stage of full implementation.

We are aware that the Soviet-American bilateral agreement did not arouse unanimous enthusiasm on the part of States members of the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that the bilateral agreement is a significant achievement which clearly demonstrates that sincere intentions cannot fail to produce results no matter what obstacles have to be surmounted.

The work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament this year cast light on a number of important and still unresolved political issues related to the future convention. Major political decisions have to be made by the negotiating parties concerning such outstanding questions as challenge and ad hoc verification, the issue of universality, the unconditional prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, assistance and protection against chemical weapons, the peaceful application of chemistry and its promotion by international co-operation, sanctions, and the political and procedural status of the executive council to be established under the convention.

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Solving these questions might well need intervention on a higher political level. In this context, we are studying with interest the idea of holding a meeting of the Conference on Disarmament at the Foreign Minister level to give the political impetus to overcome current problems preventing the Ad Hoc Committee from moving on to conclude the negotiations. Yet, we see sense in convening such an important meeting only if, after appropriate preparatory work by experts, there is a fair chance to bridge differences and to promote the final drafting of the chemical weapons convention. In this regard, we are looking forward to the consultations scheduled during the current session of the First Committee by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden.

It is rather unfortunate that meaningful negotiations on nuclear disarmament and related issues are being conducted on a bilateral level only. It is of paramount importance that the Soviet-American talks on the reduction of strategic offensive nuclear weapons be concluded by the end of the year. Although the visible outlines of the future treaty on strategic arms reductions do not present as favourable a picture as was depicted by the intention to reduce strategic offensive weapons by 50 per cent, it is nevertheless essential to conclude the treaty in order to prepare the ground for negotiations for further bilateral reductions and, when appropriate, for including the other nuclear Powers in the disarmament process. The stage-by-stage approach appears to be the road to pursue also in this field.

Besides bilateral efforts, there are encouraging signs in the regional context as well. We welcome the fact that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has indicated its readiness to scrap all of its nuclear artillery shells as a complementary measure to the outcome of the talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on short-range nuclear forces that are to begin after the conclusion

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of the first agreement on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE). These steps, once realized, would indeed underpin the idea of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons.

The most important event in multilateral disarmament diplomacy this year was undoubtedly the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held a few weeks ago. The operation of the Treaty since 1985 was thoroughly reviewed and several new forward-looking elements seemed to attract consensus. However, due to differences on some questions of disarmament - in particular, the issue of a comprehensive test-ban - no agreement could be reached on the almost complete text of the draft final document. This development is highly regrettable, since a successful review conference would have greatly facilitated prospects for exending the Treaty beyond 1995 and would also have helped in preserving some of the dignity of multilateral disarmament. It has also led to a situation where neither those who pressed for radical disarmament measures nor those who wished to neglect the role of multilateral forums in nuclear disarmament could be called winners. The sombre truth is that this failure has increased the number of losers - those States which believe that there is a future for multilateral disarmament and which are the least interested in contributing to its disintegration.

In the present circumstances, States Parties should try to maintain and strengthen the interest manifested in preserving the existing non-proliferation régime and to make use of the consensus that seemed to emerge around certain of the Treaty's substantive elements.

One such element could be the issue of the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities. The question was also dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament in its Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons, which Hungary had the honour to chair

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this year, but, unfortunately, progress could not be reported. That is why we attach great significance to the fact that the NPT Review Conference thoroughly considered the problem and appeared to come up with some new substantial and procedural proposals, among them the idea of a separate diplomatic conference. Interest was demonstrated not only by the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT - which, while fulfilling their Treaty obligations, expect to see some sort of security dividend in return - but also by the nuclear-weapon States Parties. I should like to mention here that my delegation will have additional ideas to share with representatives at a later stage in the work of the Committee.

Another idea worth mentioning here is the question of negative security assurances. The Review Conference put special emphasis on discussing the problem. Reiterating my country's position, I should like to state the following. It is a rightful demand of the countries that have renounced the nuclear option - whether or not they are members of military alliances - that the nuclear-weapon States assume a legally binding international commitment not to use or threaten to use under any circumstances nuclear weapons against States Parties to the NPT that do not possess such weapons and do not station them on their territories. That is the foundation on which Hungary is prepared to pursue negotiations which might also take the form of a diplomatic conference, as was proposed at the Review Conference.

The NPT review, the functioning of the Treaty so far and the problems of proliferation in other areas tend to suggest that an alternative method might be needed to deal with the phenomenon of proliferation. It might well be that an integrated approach would effectively complement current efforts in coping with the issue of proliferation. Such an approach would require identifying common

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features - political and technical - defining the distinction between technologies intended for peaceful and military purposes and making special arrangements for dealing with dual-purpose technologies. The partial measures taken so far to curb proliferation have shown their imperfection in recent years and perhaps the adoption of the integrated approach would be the answer for the international community to meet the challenge. In this context, the establishment of a group of experts to start work along the lines suggested and try to elaborate a set of principles that could govern further action might be considered.

A comprehensive test-ban (CTB) - which turned out to be the major impediment to reaching agreement on a final document at the NPT Review Conference - continues to be a corner-stone of multilateral disarmament. After several years of futile attempts to establish a subsidiary body, the Conference on Disarmament managed to formulate a mandate and to set up the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban. That in itself was one of the achievements of this year's work of the Conference on Disarmament. We earnestly hope that the subsidiary body will be reconstituted in 1991 with its current mandate as a minimum target, which would enforce bilateral efforts in the same field as well.

The forthcoming amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water could become another milestone in multilateral disarmament, since we cannot afford another failure. We believe that the amendment Conference could be considered a success if its conclusions are forward-looking, approach a CTB as a goal to be reached in stages, give political impetus to relevant multilateral efforts and make a commitment to the elaboration and the functioning of an appropriate verification system.

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The current session of the First Committee is expected to address the issue of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Bacteriological Weapons Convention scheduled to take place some time next year. In our view, the Conference - besides reviewing the period that has elapsed since the last review in 1986 - should be future-oriented, and should embark on working out methods for verification and the taking of additional measures to build confidence and increase transparency. We believe that these targets are not impossible to reach and that the Conference could eventually become one of the rare successes of multilateral disarmament diplomacy.

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The unprecedented progress made in the Vienna negotiations on the reduction of conventional armed forces in Europe shows that, notwithstanding the complexity of the issue and the difficulties of reconciling fundamental security interests, disarmament activity can be successful if old disagreements are put aside and efforts are concentrated on areas of accord. With the expected fulfilment of our well-founded hopes the world will witness the kind of quick, tangible result unprecedented in disarmament history. The first agreement on conventional forces in Europe, expected to be signed at the summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe later this fall, followed by further agreements, will make it possible for my country's interests to be taken into account and for its intentions to be realized - that is, to seek and ensure security outside military alliances, through the significant reduction of the military means of confrontation, in a new European collective security system based on the co-operation of equal and sovereign States. It is in this spirit that Hungary is participating in present talks on European disarmament and security, and will participate in future talks.

The history of disarmament has shown the favourable effect that measures to build confidence and increase openness and transparency has not only with regard to the atmosphere surrounding negotiations but also with regard to the security perceptions of the parties involved. Hungary is a staunch supporter of increased openness. This has been demonstrated by concrete deeds. Let me mention only the relevant steps taken this year. We provided members of the Conference on Disarmament with extensive data on our peaceful chemical industry and trading activities relevant to the future convention on chemical weapons, in accordance with our initiative launched last year, in which we declared our intention to

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comply henceforth with the draft provisions of the convention. We also gave detailed information on the ongoing reform of the Hungarian armed forces and on their current structure and strength. We started participating in the United Nations system for the reporting of military budgets. We received in Hungary negotiators from the talk on conventional forces in Europe and gave them an opportunity to study the military hardware used by our armed forces which may be affected by the provisions of the agreement on conventional forces in Europe.

It was also with the aim of strengthening openness and transparency that Hungary supported from the very outset the idea of creating an Open Skies régime and played an active part in organizing the Conference devoted to the issue. During the Ottawa and Budapest rounds of the Open Skies Conference the general framework of the system was established and agreement was reached on several practical matters. With regard to the actual functioning of the system, conceptional differences remain the bridging of which needs political decisions by negotiating parties. In our view, after the first stage of the talks on conventional forces in Europe has been concluded, there will be a possibility of resuming the work of the Open Skies Conference. We are convinced that with the necessary political decisions at their disposal the negotiators will be able speedily to establish the Open Skies régime, which could thus become the first element of a new generation of confidence-building measures.

When we try to analyse the problems of the ailing machinery of multilateral disarmament, we should avoid attempts to fix the blame for the past ineffectiveness. What is needed is to cast off old notions, abandon entrenched positions and adapt to a rapidly and fundamentally changing international environment. Ideas should not be rejected on the ground that they come from a given country - a potential adversary. In this new era, security-related problems

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and disarmament issues will have a different look and magnitude. It might not turn out to be feasible to solve them by the old approach, in which answers were sought within a rather limited context. It is here that multilateralism is indispensable. Current developments indicate that, with East-West confrontation becoming a bad memory, a new dividing line between North and South is emerging. It would be a major blunder of the international community and a terrible failure of participants in international politics if they were to sit idly by and let such an unwelcome situation unfold, especially as far as security and disarmament issues are concerned.

The successes and expected results achieved in disarmament outside the multilateral field inevitably lead to the question: What should be the fate of multilateral disarmament efforts? Are they needed at all? An almost identical question is often posed in relation to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we believe there could be a similar answer. This form of diplomacy can be criticized and its shortcomings pointed out, but the fact remains that without this machinery the international community would be worse off and would be deprived of seeking security through disarmament within a multilateral framework.

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): First may I congratulate you, Ambassador Rana, on your accession to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Nepal and the United Kingdom have enjoyed close relations of friendship and co-operation over many years, relations which my country highly values. It is therefore a great pleasure to see the representative of Nepal in the Chair, and your high personal reputation, as a result of the contributions you have made to the Security Council and the General Assembly alike, gives every confidence in your leadership of our Committee in the weeks ahead.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

1990 has been a year of dramatic contrast - a year of miracles in Europe: tearing down the barriers between East and West, rebuilding a united Germany, reducing radically the levels of armed forces; but a year of violence on another continent, where overwhelming military power has been used by Iraq to commit unprovoked aggression against a vulnerable neighbour.

The highlights of the East-West advance toward normality are well known. They are perhaps epitomized in the call from the London summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in July this year for a joint declaration between the member States of the two alliances in Europe to make clear that we are no longer adversaries and invite other member States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to join in this commitment to non-aggression. As was stated at the London summit meeting:

> "Europe has entered a new, promising era ... Today our alliance begins a major transformation."

The United Kingdom, for its part, has this year considered options for change in its defence policies in the light of the expected signature and implementation of a conventional-forces-in-Europe agreement. With this event now likely, the United Kingdom would envisage reducing in the mid-1990s its stationed forces in Germany by roughly half their present strength. Who would have thought even a year ago that such sweeping changes would come about so quickly? Is it the speed or the extent of change that surprises us more?

Arms control and disarmament are flourishing between East and West. Where does this leave global disarmament - the business of the United Nations and of the Conference on Disarmament? Critics would reply, "on the sidelines of events". I do not believe this is true. But I think we would all agree that the United Nations should and could do more.

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One of the brightest sides to the tragic developments in the Gulf has been the strength and cohesion of the reaction by the international community through the organs of the United Nations. The United Nations is fulfilling the role of keeper of the peace which its founders intended for it. But this has been a case of acting against aggression when it occurs. Should not the United Nations act to limit the tools of aggression before they are used, indeed in the hope of avoiding their ever being put to use?

Global arms control and disarmament agreements are one way the United Nations can restrain the arms of war, and I shall examine this aspect more closely in a minute. But I should like to look first at another aspect - the influence the United Nations can bring to bear on regional and subregional situations, especially in those regions where little has so far been done to bring the growth of armaments under control. That, after all, is where the most immediate danger lies of arms being put to use. The United Nations role in such situations is much less clearly defined, and there are all sorts of sensitivities. Even so the United Nations need not stand aside.

First there has to be greater clarity about the scope of the United Nations concern. The focus has so far been concentrated on East-West confrontation with the massive build-up it generated. If this was ever understandable in the past, it is now certainly out of date. Much still remains to be done between East and West, but at least the process is well launched and the momentum strong. The very success in Europe turns the spotlight onto other parts of the world.

It has become a truism that we are moving from a bipolar to a multipolar world. Proliferation of arms into regions of high political tensions is one of the most worrying developments of recent years. For the most part the United Nations has tended to look the other way. The events in the Gulf demonstrate how

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unrealistic that has been. The armed forces of Iraq total approximately 1 million personnel. They are equipped with some 5,500 main battle tanks. Iraq has dozens of missiles and hundreds of aircraft and has made use in the past of that most detestable of arms, the chemical weapon. The armed forces of the invader were 50 times the size of those of its victim.

The United Nations cannot continue to pretend the problem of armaments is confined mainly to Europe and North America. Let this First Committee be a turning-point in this respect. Let there be no more resolutions hobbled with phrases meaning "Outside Europe, United Nations, mind your own business". Let us look reality in the face and recognize that the problem of over-armament exists in virtually every region of the world. And no more suggestions, please, that only the super-Powers need reduce their forces. Even a small or medium State can upset regional stability if armed more heavily than its neighbours.

If the United Nations is at last allowed to speak out unambiguously for restraint in the accumulation of armed power in all the regions of the world and especially in areas of tension, that in itself will give the voice of the international community a new authority. However, exhortations from the world body, influential though they can be, are not enough. I believe the United Nations can help in more practical ways. I should like to mention two.

The first concerns the transfer of armaments. Weapons, including the most sophisticated, are traded between countries on a vast scale. The sale of arms need not be harmful. Indeed, where threatening asymmetries within any region cannot be corrected by levelling down, the second best can be to level up. It is each country's sovereign right to judge what arms it requires to protect its national security interests. Furthermore, among allies some degree of division of labour in production of armaments can assist in cutting costs.

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But there is a dark side to the trade in arms. The easy availability of armaments can enable a State to build up its arsenals beyond the needs of defence, to levels more consistent with aggressive ambitions. The arms trade can help fuel an arms race in an area of tension. At its worst those engaged in clandestine arms sales activities direct their efforts at encouraging States to divert resources into armaments they might otherwise not have sought. Governments have a duty, first, to prevent the illegal sale of arms from their territories; and, secondly, to control legal sales in a responsible manner.

The General Assembly has already recognized its duty to act in this area. The establishment of the United Nations study on ways and means to promote transparency in international transfers of conventional arms is particularly welcome. The study is a demonstration of the unique role the United Nations can play in discussions of conventional armaments, given universal responsibility for the control of these weapons. The United Kingdom is committed to playing a full part in the study and supports a United Nations register of arms transfers which is universal and non-discriminatory.

The second practical way the United Nations can help the process of regional arms control and disarmament is as a centre for information and advice at the disposal of those wanting to work for arms reductions in their own region. Arms control is a highly complex and difficult endeavour. Even once the political will emerges, the question of how best to achieve the desired end can be daunting. A wealth of experience is accumulating from a number of quarters, including recent and current negotiations between East and West. The kinds of lessons I have in mind range from general principles of arms control to detailed techniques which have been successfully applied. For example, what is the interrelationship between arms reductions and relaxation of political tensions? What types of conventional

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weaponry are seen as particularly threatening and therefore deserving high-priority attention? On what criteria should levels of reductions of armaments be based? What use can be made of confidence-building measures, and which ones suit what stage in the reconciliation process? What verification processes are needed for what weaponry? And there are even still more prosaic matters: how to define a tank or an artillery piece? When does a training aircraft become a fighter?

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Of course techniques must differ to fit the circumstances of each case. Nevertheless, negotiators should not have to reinvent the wheel every time. They should be able to draw on the experience of others and adapt it as they see fit.

The United Nations has done useful work, particularly in the Disarmament Commission, in listing principles of confidence-building measures and verification, and objective information is now being tackled. But this is only a small part of the field. I see a need for the United Nations to draw up a compilation of methodology used in regional and subregional arms-control and disarmament negotiations over, say, the past two decades. This should then be kept up to date on a regular basis. It need be no more than a collection of relevant agreements with short commentaries on each one concerning the sort of aspects I have mentioned. The main aim is to make sure that all the information is readily available in one place and readily comprehensible. Such a compendium would not be expensive to compile. The cost could be found within existing financial resources. If other delegations see merit in that proposal, the United Kingdom delegation will be ready to submit a draft resolution for possible adoption by the First Committee.

Alongside this role as an information clearing-house the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat can play a useful facilitating role, especially at the early stages of moves towards regional or subregional negotiations. This has to be handled in a sensitive and discreet manner, in close liaison with the countries concerned. But much can be done by organizing the right seminar at the right time, by responding to requests for information on the sort of negotiating methodolgy I have mentioned. Not only the Headquarters staff in New York and Geneva but also the staff of regional offices have a contribution to make. I know this is already happening. Under-Secretary-General Akashi and his staff have done pioneering work in this direction, and so have others. It should continue.

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

The activities I have mentioned are the everyday work of the United Nations, humdrum but of real utility. I come back now to the more headline-catching business of global arms-control and disarmament negotiations. We have just completed the review of one of the most important arms-control measures, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are negotiating and, I trust, will soon complete, another major disarmament agreement, a chemical weapons convention.

The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons did not produce a final declaration, but it did produce significant and positive results. The Conference once more reasserted the great importance attached by States Parties to the continuing vitality and effectiveness of the non-proliferation Treaty. States Parties continue to see the Treaty as necessary for world security and, indeed, for the national security of each individual State in the context of that State's regional circumstances.

The Conference gave a new impetus to the Treaty in a number of practical ways. There was, for example, strong emphasis on the vital need for all States Parties to comply scrupulously and unreservedly with their non-proliferation obligations. There was emphasis on the need for all States Parties to ensure they do not assist the acquisition of a nuclear-weapon capability by non-party States; there was emphasis on the unqualified obligation of States Parties to conclude and bring into force safeguards agreements, particularly those States whose nuclear activity makes such safeguards applicable, and on the importance of strengthening the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and on the potential usefulness of provisions, already within the Treaty but not yet applied, which might be termed challenge inspection.

There were a number of other helpful ideas for further consideration and action, and the welcome presence of China and France for the first time as

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observers at the Conferennce demonstrated the high standing and influence of the Treaty, outside as well as within its membership.

Since then has come the excellent news of the accession of Mozambique to the non-proliferation Treaty referred to this morning by the representative of Mozambique. This is an important and welcome development. My Government hopes that Mozambique's example will be followed by all States not yet parties to the Treaty. In this regard we much welcome too the decision by Albania to accede.

Why, then, did the Review Conference end without a final declaration? In 1985, a meagre period for arms control and disarmament, it proved possible to agree on a Final Declaration. In 1990, a time vibrant with dramatic East-West disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, it did not prove possible. Does this make sense? It is certainly regrettable, even though agreement was blocked by only one delegation.

In fact, consensus was achieved on nearly all issues. The point of breakdown, as we all know, was a comprehensive test ban, on which widely differing views are held. The United Kingdom position is that the complete cessation of nuclear testing is a long-term goal which should occur as part of an effective disarmament process and that that process should pursue as a first priority deep and verifiable reductions in the existing arsenals of nuclear weapons.

In our view the right approach to further limitations on testing is to continue with the stage-by-stage negotiations already embarked upon by the United States and the Soviet Union. We welcome the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear testing in the Conference on Disarmament, and we look forward to resumption of substantive work in January. We do not think that the convening of an amendment conference to the partial test-ban Treaty to consider an amendment that would convert that Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty is timely or

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appropriate. Nevertheless, while we are not prepared to enter into negotiations for an amendment, if the conference can be used for constructive discussion we should certainly be ready to contribute.

We acknowledge that many other delegations hold a different position and would like a comprehensive test ban to be concluded in the immediate future. But the question is whether the non-proliferation Treaty is to be held hostage to the achievement of any one aspect of nuclear disarmament. My impression is that the overwhelming majority of States Parties, including many that desire an early comprehensive test ban, hold strongly that the non-proliferation Treaty is valuable in its own right and are not prepared to put its future at risk by this sort of linkage.

I turn now to the efforts by the international community to remove chemical weapons from the arsenals of the world. The United Kingdom has long co-operated with other countries to prevent the proliferation of chemical weapons through the adoption of effective national export controls. In June we extended our own controls régime to cover 21 of the key chemical precursors.

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But export controls in no way lessen the importance of the negotiations in Geneva on a new global agreement, a total ban on chemical weapons. A chemical-weapons convention is a high priority for the United Kingdom. Its framework is agreed. But I must confess to disappointment with the limited progress that has been made this year. The momentum, which at one stage seemed likely to move us to an early successful conclusion, now seems to be faltering.

My own Government wants an agreement as soon as possible. We want an effective ban and that means one with convincing verification, otherwise it would simply not serve its purpose.

The key lies in a system of challenge inspection which will ensure the level of confidence required. The United Kingdom has put a considerable amount of effort and resources into developing such a system. We have held a series of practice challenge inspections at our most sensitive government facilities. The results have been submitted in a report to the Conference on Disarmament. Our tests were designed to elaborate an effective procedure which, through the use of managed access techniques, would allow a balance between protection of legitimate security interests and the degree of intrusiveness necessary for effective verification of any site. We hope that the findings of our detailed practical work will contribute to an early consensus on this crucial issue.

Let 1991 be the year when the impulse returns to the negotiations on a chemical-weapons ban. If not, we could miss the tide of opportunity to outlaw this grim form of weaponry.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will recall that, at our organizational meeting, I noted that at the request of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden,

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an informal meeting would be set aside again this year to enable him to inform delegations to the First Committee on the situation prevailing in negotiations on a chemical-weapons convention at the Conference on Disarmament, and to provide an opportunity for all the States not participating in the negotiations to express their views.

I am now in a position to inform the Committee that such an informal meeting will take place on 25 October from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.