UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
Thirteenth meeting
held on
Wednesday, 23 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland)

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91-61535 6769V (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.1/46/PV.13
31 October 1991

ENGLISH

Best Copy Available

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana): On behalf of the delegation of Ghana, I wish first of all to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the Bureau on your election to steer the affairs of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. Ghana is confident that under your able chairmanship, we will witness a fruitful session. We assure you of our full-hearted cooperation.

The end of the cold war has created opportunities for the international community, particularly the United Nations, to establish the foundations for lasting international peace and security. Peace and security that endure cannot depend on outmoded concepts of deterrence and balance of power, which were accompanied by an unprecedented escalation of arms build-up over and above the legitimate requirements of national security recognized under Article 51 of the Charter. Local - not even regional - conflicts, which could otherwise have been resolved without resort to arms became internationalized in the name of ideology. The legitimate concerns of the States Members of the Organization became drowned in the din of ideological battles.

With the end of the ideological confrontation period, the world has begun to witness important initiatives, particularly in the field of disarmament. The successful implementation of the Treaty on intermediate-range missiles - the INF Treaty - the destruction of a whole class of nuclear weapons - has been followed by commendable measures in the other classes of nuclear weapons, namely short-range and intercontinental missiles. Even before the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), signed in Moscow on 31 July this year, could be ratified by the United States and the Soviet Union, the leaders of the two

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

countries took steps beyond what had been agreed under the Treaty so as to further reduce their nuclear weapons. The initiative taken by President Bush on 27 September this year on tactical and battlefield nuclear weapons, artillery shells and short-range ballistic missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles and the size of the armed forces did not evoke cynical responses as the world would have expected in the cold war era. Instead, President Gorbachev increased the momentum of voluntary reductions in nuclear weapons with equally important initiatives on 5 October 1991. We are pleased to note, moreover, that he is in a favourable position to do so.

The legitimate concerns of the world over strategic defence measures are beginning to be addressed. Even though it has been pointed out that it does not represent any real change in policy, the intimation by the United States of its willingness to negotiate with the Soviet Union specific limits on anti-missile systems gives hope that the seeming inconsistency between reductions in nuclear arms and the START programme could be removed. Confidence cannot be built on another race involving nuclear defence systems. We urge the United States and the Soviet Union to continue with their initiatives until the world becomes free of all nuclear weapons. We expect the other nuclear Powers to join freely in the battle for peace and security in the world.

In this regard, we wish to stress how important it is for the United Nations to take appropriate measures to secure the world against both horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear arms. Preparations have to be made as soon as possible to ensure that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is extended beyond 1995. We do recognise with appreciation the decision taken by France and China to accede to the Treaty.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

We are particularly gratified at the efforts to forestall proliferation in Africa. The accession to the NPT by Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the declared intention of Namibia to do the same, are commendable. At long last, the regime in South Africa has recognized the usefulness of submitting to the safeguards inspection regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

While Ghana has observed the substantial reduction in the levels of testing of nuclear devices, the one-year moratorium recently announced by the Soviet Union deserves special mention. On this score, we wish to stress the need for strict compliance with this moratorium.

The weapons of mass destruction are not limited to nuclear arsenals alone. Chemical and biological weapons continue to pose a threat to mankind. Even though the world has yet to start the process of ridding itself of these weapons, the end of the cold war has encouraged important indications. A lot of groundwork has been done in the forum of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament to produce a chemical weapons convention. We would urge that the momentum be maintained towards a speedy conclusion of this work. The Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Destruction and Non-Production of Chemical Weapons and the very praiseworthy statement by President Bush of the renunciation by the United States of the use of chemical weapons, even for purposes of retaliation should encourage all members to work towards completion of the drafting of the chemical weapons convention. The important conclusions of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the biological and toxin weapons Convention of 1972 should promote more nearly universal adherence to the Convention and implementation of its provisions, particularly those relating to verification.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

The removal of, or reductions in, nuclear arsenals and the efforts at elimination of chemical, biological and toxin weapons should not necessarily make the world safe for conventional warfare. Disarmament should be complete. It is for this reason that we welcome the successful conclusion of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in November last year.

While all these measures are commendable and should be encouraged, my delegation wishes to stress that they are not likely to secure international peace and security if they do not lead to the establishment of international structures that command general acceptance by the international community. In brief, a world order that seeks to perpetuate interests that prevailed before and after the Second World War - a world order that only assumes a resumption of the history of domination and exploitation - cannot guarantee international peace and security.

And yet, that seems to be the road the world is taking. The collapse of the socialist empire has been interpreted as an ideological victory that should dictate the wholesale resumption of the values and practices that gave rise to socialism.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

The lesson that the world should want to learn from the Gulf war is the danger of horizontal proliferation of weapons. As a result, measures are being proposed predicated on the untenable assumption that the peace and security of the world would be assured by the concentration of weapons in the hands of a few. The Nuclear Supplies Club, the Missiles Technology Control Regime and the Australian Group have all emerged not to secure the elimination of nuclear and chemical weapons but to ensure that others do not possess them.

Ghana is rather concerned that, in spite of the certainty that East-West relations will not return to the era of confrontation, resistance still persists to the transformation of the partial test-ban Treaty into the comprehensive test-ban Treaty. The indisputable linkage between the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and the elimination of nuclear weapons is still not appreciated by the nuclear Powers.

Instead, pressures continue to multiply for disarming the rest of the world. It has all too soon been forgotten that the rest of the world was armed by the same proponents of disarmament who, as if by coincidence, are at one and the same time the leading exporters of arms and the permanent members of the Security Council - a body entrusted with the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Ghana has taken appropriate measures to reduce its expenditure on its armed forces. We speak of peace through disarmament not out of any consideration of securing advantages to ourselves. We do so out of genuine concern for global justice, for we believe that peace that is built on justice lasts longer than peace that is built on might or threats.

In this regard, we wish to state that we have carefully examined the study of the Secretary-General, assisted by Government experts, on ways and means to promote transparency in the international transfer of conventional

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arms on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. We can join the initiative to establish a United Nations register for the transfer of arms. All efforts should, however, be deployed to maximize the impact of this register. To that extent, Ghana is not persuaded by the unexamined assumption that the register will help build mutual confidence and strengthen overall security. It is true that military might is often built as a reaction to a country's assessment of the military strength of its adversary or potential adversary. It is equally true that the certain knowledge of such strength that the register will promote could also encourage an incipient arms race.

An even more important consideration is the discriminatory nature of the register. General Assembly resolution 43/75 identified two main features that should characterize the promotion of transparency in international transfers of conventional arms. These are universality and non-discrimination. The proposed register does not address these features. It does not cover the production and stockpiling of arms. The transfer of arms should necessarily include transfers from production to user and stockpile locations. It is the view of our delegation that a lot of work still has to be done on the proposed register to enhance the prospects of its effectiveness as a contribution to disarmament. It is accordingly suggested that the study contained in document A/46/301 should be passed on by the Secretary-General to Member States for their study and observations.

The history of the world before the Second World War was one of naked domination and economic exploitation. It was a world of empires and far-flung colonies. For over 40 years after the war, efforts aimed at reconstructing the world away from domination and economic exploitation split the world along ideological lines. The confrontation and tension of the cold war years generated an unprecedented arms race based on the untenable concepts of

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

balance of power and deterrence - concepts that appeared to sanction the Hobbesian state of nature in which only the fittest survive. The cost of the arms race, apart from posing a threat to the peace it sought to maintain, is the diversion of resources away from economic and human development. Such diversion could not be sustained. Dialogue and cooperation have emerged once again as plausible instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The history of domination, economic exploitation and bully tactics cannot and should not be resumed if we want to lay firm foundations for international peace and security. Disarmament should be considered as a package which requires contributions from all. The Conference on Disarmament should be recognized as the appropriate multilateral forum for negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations. It should therefore open its doors to a more democratic membership. Let the world resist the temptation to secure the peace of the world by disarming the majority, with the few constituting themselves into the policemen of the world. The lessons of colonialism, which began and survived on military might alone supplemented with a massive dose of racism, have not been lost on the world.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the delegation of Venezuela, I take pleasure in expressing our sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your guidance, we will achieve important results. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We are seeing a very different international reality to that which existed only a few years ago. Recent events, which we would not hesitate to qualify as historic, have made longstanding antagonisms and intransigence obsolete and have enabled in particular the emergence of better prospects

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

for peace and understanding among nations. We have left far behind the duels of the cold war which had for so many years mortgaged the future of nations with a relentless nuclear arms race.

The end of this century will see the beginning of what might be a new era of opportunity, an age which, of course, also carries its owns risks and potential conflicts of various kinds. For that reason, when we now talk of a new world order, and when in unprecedented circumstances the search is proposed for a broader, multidimensional and interdependent system of international security, we must ensure that such plans will benefit all peoples and that the United Nations will play a decisive role in this process.

The dialogue and openness characteristic of the new international situation have contributed to the solution of conflicts. They have helped give rise to agreements on disarmament and arms control, confidence-building measures and various initiatives pertaining to the nuclear arms race and non-proliferation. Even such a serious and unfortunate crisis as the Gulf war has served to heighten the international community's awareness of the threat posed by the use of weapons of mass destruction and of the need to adopt concrete measures to neutralize such dangers.

The intensive cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union led to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which was made possible by a redefinition of the codes of conduct between the two countries, by the removal of ideology from their foreign policies and by a homogeneous perception of international security policy.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

We want again to stress the significance of the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and we note that such agreements could help support an international system increasingly based on confidence and transparency, and could act as catalysts for future universal disarmament instruments, instruments which would let us replace nuclear deterrence with a strategy based on common security.

Those considerations are particularly important today in the light of recent major initiatives by the United States and the Soviet Union, including unilateral decisions and bilateral proposals. We welcome such initiatives and hope that the various proposals will find concrete form, thus making a major contribution to efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals and eliminate certain categories of weapons.

Yet the final cessation of nuclear testing is not being considered. Nor are measures to halt the development of space-based defensive systems, or an end to strategies based, on one pretext or another, on such systems; for that reason the threat of outer space becoming the site of an unbridled arms race persists. We know that as the nuclear-arms competition grows more sophisticated it is increasingly based on qualitative innovations - a seemingly irreversible trend.

Obviously, much remains to be done. In recent decades we have lived under the protection of a nuclear peace. Nevertheless - and this is not a quixotic exhortation - we have always aspired - and we shall always aspire - to progress towards the consolidation of a world peace in which doctrines of nuclear deterrence would play a steadily diminishing role.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

The goal of a nuclear-test ban has been elusive, owing to the persistence of considerations based on the requirement of absolute security. The arguments used in sidestepping that goal have ranged from the alleged technical inadequacies of verification methods to the need to preserve the reliability, effectiveness and security of nuclear arsenals in order to strengthen nuclear deterrence. Those delaying tactics lack justification and make no political sense, for they are intended to postpone the attainment of a security objective we should all share, especially as today's international climate is supposedly more propitious for understanding.

We stress that measures to prevent the cycle of development and production of nuclear weapons, including testing, could lead to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race in the short term.

We must press forward with efforts to convert the 1963 partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive treaty. In the view of my delegation it is necessary to make progress in this area, and to resume the work of the Amendment Conference, which began in January 1991, in conformity with the mandate of its Chairman.

We cannot fail to express our gratification at the recent announcement by President Gorbachev on the Soviet Union's declaration of a one-year unilateral moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests. We think that is a step in the right direction and that one way or another it should have a positive effect in promoting broader important objectives in that sphere.

Those considerations with regard to nuclear-weapon testing must be seen in the light of our expectations for the future non-proliferation regime, in particular the decision that will have to be taken in 1995 on extending the

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Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is in the interests of all to ensure compliance with horizontal and vertical non-proliferation rules and to promote full respect for all provisions of the Treaty.

As already said, it is to be hoped that the recent announcements by France and China of their intention to accede to the NPT will soon be realized. The strengthening, universality and credibility of the non-proliferation regime are among our main challenges for the coming years.

The year 1972 saw the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. We are now on the road to completing our negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. For more than a decade the Conference on Disarmament has been engaged in intensive negotiations to that end. Many differences have been resolved, and today the draft convention is at an advanced stage of negotiation.

We must recognize that a decisive impetus in that process was the decision of the United States Government, announced by President Bush this year, not to use chemical weapons under any circumstances, including in retaliation, against any State, and to destroy all its chemical-weapons arsenals.

There remain questions relating to verification, in particular procedures for challenge inspection in cases of violations of the convention's provisions, and relating to the future decision-making political body of the convention, the executive council. Outstanding too is the question of financing the future organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

We are confident that outstanding issues can be resolved and that the negotiations on chemical weapons can be completed next year. In that way, the Conference on Disarmament will at last present the international community with an outstanding, concrete product; with that stimulus it will certainly be able to devote its attention to crucial items such as the prohibition of nuclear testing and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The Third Review Conference of the bacteriological-weapons Convention ended recently. Its Final Declaration includes important statements relating to strengthening that Convention. Among them we would highlight the recognition of the need to strengthen the Convention's verification machinery as a means of improving its effectiveness. In that connection, it was agreed to convene a meeting of governmental experts, open to all States parties, to consider and identify potential verification measures from the scientific and technical standpoint. We believe that meeting should go further, for what is needed is a broader, political view.

Environmental protection deserves special attention by the international community. The question of the relationship between disarmament, development and the environment must remain on the United Nations agenda. We believe that the study on possible applications for military resources reallocated to civilian environmental-protection purposes is a good start and a most useful contribution.

In terms of the use of technology and the manufacture and use of certain types of weapons, the arms race has had ecological consequences. Disarmament measures themselves could lead to activities with a serious impact on the environment, among them the use of systems for the destruction of weapons, the transport of weapons for destruction, the treatment of waste and the destruction of production facilities.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

For those reasons we consider that all measures taken should include provisions guaranteeing the protection of the environment. The resources released as a result of the cessation of the arms race could be channelled into sustainable development, particularly of the developing countries, by means of the promotion of proper ecological management.

The continued application of scientific and technological advances to the production of weapons has a dual effect on disarmament. As a result of the development of more sophisticated weapon systems, in many cases the dividing line between conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction has become rather blurred. Furthermore, the cost of the technological input incorporated in the new weapons is increasingly onerous. In a world in which the scarcity of resources, the onslaught on the environment and the critical economic and social situation are among the major concerns of countries, the international community must give greater attention to this question in order to make sure that the progress in science and technology is used first of all for constructive purposes.

Regional disarmament may be an effective complement to worldwide measures and an important component of the gradual approach to world disarmament, as has been emphasized by the Disarmament Commission. The idea, as we have pointed out on other occasions, is that regional disarmament efforts should not be diluted and that regions should not be turned into isolated cases or "islands of peace" in the international system but rather should generate an impetus towards subsequent measures of broader scope and more universal application. Bilateral and regional actions must be strengthened by means of multilateral efforts. We must not forget the obvious fact of interdependence

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

in our time; nor must we forget that security is universal and integral, because it affects all of us.

From that point of view, we wish to emphasize again the importance of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean - the Treaty of Tlatelolco - which will be 25 years old next year. We also urge those countries of the region which have not yet become parties to the Treaty to sign and ratify it, thereby upholding the Latin American and Caribbean commitment to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We also wish to highlight the recent initiatives taken in Latin America for consolidating the region as a zone of peace and cooperation free from weapons of mass destruction. The declaration on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, signed by various countries in the Mendoza Accord and Peru's proposal for the signing of a declaration on the renunciation of the production and use of weapons of mass destruction constitute encouraging examples of a most promising trend.

The problem of the transfer of conventional weapons is coming increasingly to the fore these days. This is an alarming contemporary phenomenon which we must examine most carefully, particularly because of its potential impact on various areas where regional disputes may lead to breaches of international peace and security, and also because of its adverse effect on economic and social development - all of which makes the illicit arms trade more and more disturbing.

We feel that the time has come to take a more rational approach to this question, in international circumstances which, in the light of recent confidence-building measures in various regions, appear to be conducive to the

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

advancement of specific initiatives. We feel that the transfer of arms and of military technology, without prejudice to the principle of the self-defence of States, should be governed not only by economic and commercial considerations but also by criteria which would allow for transparency in the arms trade.

We have considered in detail the study on ways and means of promoting transparency in the transfers of conventional weapons, which contains recommendations that should be given special consideration by this Committee. We are interested in the possibility of establishing machinery, such as a United Nations register of arms transfers, of a universal, non-discriminatory and voluntary nature, as a significant confidence-building measure and as a first step in dealing with such a complex problem. To that end, we would support the establishment of a panel of experts which, together with the United Nations Secretary-General, would determine the precise modalities of the relevant machinery.

In the past there have been few reasons, if any, for us to feel satisfied with regard to the attainment of the goals of this Committee. On this occasion we can draw up a different balance sheet in the light of the favourable evolution in various aspects of our agenda and the reasonable prospects for future work. We wish to place on record our gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the intensive work it has done and its efforts to promote the World Disarmament Campaign.

Disarmament and arms control are crucial elements in smoothing the way towards the new world order that is so much talked of these days and contributing, necessarily within the context of interdependence, to overcoming old and new problems confronting the international community. Changes in the

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

world scene have led to the expansion and strengthening of democracy and human rights in many countries. An equally desirable trend is the desire to move towards the democratization of international relations and towards world peace. Our task now is to reinforce the machinery provided by the United Nations for the promotion of international peace and security based not only on military and strategic considerations but also on economic and social development, the preservation of the environment and the protection of human rights. We must not squander the opportunities now available to us in these crucial times.

Mr. REFAQAT (Pakistan): It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, Sir, the heartiest felicitations on behalf of the Pakistan delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that, with your vast experience and diplomatic skills, you will successfully guide the deliberations of our Committee. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Pakistan has welcomed the relaxation of international tensions. The cold war is behind us. The new era which is marked by a transformation of the East-West relations has presented us with challenges and valuable opportunites in strengthening international and regional peace and stability and in pursuing disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and confidence-building.

Pakistan has ceaselessly endeavoured to promote the cause of international peace and security and the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The conclusion of the strategic arms reduction Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union has been a source of immense gratification for us. The recent announcements of

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

President Bush and President Gorbachev of bold and far-reaching measures encompassing, among others, the elimination of land and sea-based tactical nuclear weapons represents major progress towards nuclear disarmament. We have welcomed these initiatives and sincerely hope that this process will eventually culminate in the total destruction of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

Pakistan has lent its full support to the initiative to convert the partial test-ban Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We accordingly participated in the Amendment Conference held in January 1991 and supported the decision calling for the reconvening of the Conference at an appropriate time.

A comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is long overdue. It is essential that efforts leading to the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons be continued and accelerated. Undoubtedly, given the necessary political will, problems of a technical nature will not place any serious hurdles in the way of the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The response of the nuclear-weapon States will a litmus test of their intentions.

Pending the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, nuclear-test-ban agreements could be arrived at among regional States in various parts of the world. These regional agreements would not only act as major confidence-building measures, but would also facilitate the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Pakistan has consistently expressed deep anguish over the threat posed to non-nuclear-weapon States by the nuclear arsenals of nuclear-weapon States. The ultimate assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be their complete elimination. However, until the attainment of this objective, the non-nuclear-weapon States must be provided with credible and legally binding guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Such assurances are vital for enhancing the sense of security in non-nuclear-weapon States. We look forward to concrete progress on the issue of negative security assurances, on which my delegation will be presenting a draft resolution again this year.

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

The global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other, are not mutually exclusive and should be pursued simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security. The objective of peace and security is so important that all efforts, both global and regional, must be deployed to achieve that end. For a large number of States, perceived threats to their security and the need for military preparedness are primarily connected with conditions obtaining in their own regions. A regional approach offers the most realistic prospect for meaningful progress towards disarmament, since the threat perceptions and security concerns vary from region to region. This approach is steadily gaining ground as evidenced by the adoption of resolution 45/58 P on regional disarmament presented by Pakistan to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. That resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority and we hope that the draft resolution we submit on this item this year will get even wider support.

There is a growing recognition in the world today that many security problems and preoccupations of States can be accorded fuller consideration in the regional context, where remedial measures that are suitable to specific conditions can be designed. The success of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process, which has resulted in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, bears testimony to the idea that regional consultations offer the best and most relevant answers to many of the problems of security and arms control. We hope that the new momentum towards greater confidence, security and cooperation in Europe will also give a boost to regional efforts in other parts of the world.

It is indeed a matter of great satisfaction for us that at the 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, a new item "Regional

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

approach to disarmament within the context of global security" was placed on the agenda. It is our expectation that the Disarmament Commission will, in due course, recommend concrete measures for regional disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and confidence-building measures in various regions with a view to promoting international peace and security.

In Pakistan's view, the following concrete measures can be taken to promote the regional approach to disarmament in the nuclear field: first, the objective of non-proliferation could be furthered by the conclusion of regional test-ban agreements; secondly, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which provide an important mechanism for regional non-proliferation, should be seriously pursued; thirdly, regional States should jointly declare not to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons and should reach agreements against attacks on each other's nuclear facilities; fourthly, regional conferences should be convened to discuss nuclear non-proliferation issues with a view to concluding legally binding agreements on nuclear non-proliferation at the regional and subregional levels.

In the conventional field the following steps could facilitate regional disarmament: first, dialogue among regional States for the settlement of outstanding differences and disputes through peaceful means in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter as well as relevant United Nations resolutions; second, joint renunciation by regional States of policies of interference, intervention, coercion, domination or hegemony, or the use or threat of use of force in any form whatsoever; third, negotiations among regional States for equitable and balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons ensuring equal and undiminished security for all States at the lowest level of armaments and armed forces; fourth, agreement among

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regional States on restrictions and limitations on force deployments and movements; fifth, agreement to set up "hot lines" between Heads of State or Government and military commanders of regional States to communicate directly and immediately with each other whenever necessary; sixth, institutionalization of regular meetings among military commanders of regional States to avoid misperceptions and to overcome suspicions; seventh, agreement to invite observers from regional States to exercises conducted by any one of them.

Pakistan is fully committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. At the same time, we call upon the nuclear Powers to move towards nuclear disarmament and promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. The concept of nuclear non-proliferation must not be used as a pretext to prevent the developing countries from acquiring nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In pursuance of our regional approach to nuclear non-proliferation, we have expressed willingness to accept an equitable and non-discriminatory regime for keeping South Asia free of nuclear weapons. In view of the renewed attention that is currently being focused on the dangers of nuclear proliferation, we would like to highlight some of the proposals made by Pakistan over the past two decades. These include the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, a proposal that has been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly since 1974, and the issuance of a joint declaration by India and Pakistan renouncing the acquisition or manufacture of nuclear weapons. In 1979, we proposed an agreement with India on a system of bilateral inspection of all nuclear facilities on a reciprocal basis. In 1979

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again, we proposed simultaneous acceptance of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards by India and Pakistan on all nuclear facilities. The same year we also expressed our readiness to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty, simultaneously with India. In 1987, we proposed the conclusion of a bilateral or regional nuclear-test-ban treaty. The same year, we also proposed the convening of an international conference on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of regional and other States.

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

As recently as 6 June this year the Prime Minister of Pakistan put forward three important proposals for arms control and nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia. These proposals call for: consultations by the United States, the Soviet Union and China with India and Pakistan to ensure nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia; bilateral arrangements or a regional regime for the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction in South Asia; and the mutual and balanced reduction of forces in South Asia, consistent with the principle of equal and undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments.

We are encouraged by the positive response of many countries to these proposals. We hope that India too will respond positively, particularly to the proposal for five-nation consultations on a nuclear-non-proliferation regime in South Asia. Nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia is a vital condition for regional peace, security and progress. The proposals made by our Prime Minister are in keeping with the spirit of the times and reflect our genuine desire that the South Asian countries should concentrate their efforts on economic development through the diversion, to development, of resources currently allocated to defence.

The Geneva negotiations on the chemical-weapons convention have acquired a qualitatively new content. While it has been found possible to identify all the elements necessary for the future convention, certain areas of disagreement prevail. Although we are happy at the renewed impetus that the negotiations received this year as a result of the change in the position of the United States on certain issues, it is imperative that due regard be shown for the views of all negotiating partners so that we may be able to draft a

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convention that is comprehensive and fair and will therefore command the type of universal adherence that we all seek.

The question of arms transfers should be considered within the overall context of conventional-arms control, taking into account the indigenous defence-production capabilities, armaments stockpiles, military-technology transfers and security concerns of States.

Each country has the sovereign right to determine its own legitimate defence needs. Many small and medium-sized States, lacking indigenous defence-production capabilities, are obliged to depend upon international transfers of arms to meet their basic security needs. In some cases, threats to their security emanate from neighbouring States with large indigenous defence-production capabilities and armaments stockpiles. Obviously, the inability to acquire arms through international transfers would endanger the security of such small and vulnerable States. This would have a destabilizing effect on international peace and security. It is essential, therefore, that the issue of arms transfers be considered in an integrated manner - that is, together with related aspects that I mentioned earlier.

At its current session the First Committee has before it a study, prepared by a group of governmental experts, on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms. In this study the experts recommend the establishment of an arms-transfer register. Unfortunately, the study does not include a comprehensive analysis of the integrally related aspects of the proposal and its implications for the security of Member States and for regional and international peace and stability. Neither does it provide any details about the format of, and the procedures under, the proposed arms-transfer register.

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

In the view of my delegation, it would therefore be premature for the General Assembly, at its current session, to take a decision on the establishment of the proposed register. Instead, the General Assembly should establish a group of governmental experts to study ways and means of promoting transparency in the field of armaments as a significant confidence-building measure, including, inter alia, the merits of establishing, under United Nations auspices, a universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and voluntary international reporting system to cover the production, stockpiling and transfer of armaments, delivery systems and armaments technology, taking into account the security irterests of member States and the need to maintain regional balance in the light of the specific characteristics of different regions. Member States must be given an opportunity to express their views on the proposed new study before the General Assembly pronounces itself on the subject of transparency in the field of armaments.

The wide disparity between the armaments expenditures of militarily strong States and of other States cannot be justified. Therefore, those States that possess large military arsenals should initiate reductions in military budgets. In efforts to reduce military expenditure, due consideration must be given to the security concerns of small and vulnerable States.

Owing to the rapid increase in the naval power of some States, the question of naval disarmament needs to be addressed urgently. The acquisition of aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines by some regional States gives rise to grave concern among their smaller neighbours.

The danger of weapons deployed in space and directed against objects in space or on Earth is a matter for serious concern. The increasing danger of

(Mr. Refaqat, Pakistan)

the military uses of outer space as a result of scientific and technological advance leads us to believe that the existing legal regime, which imposes some restrictions on the military uses of outer space, is not enough to prevent an arms race in outer space.

It is important that the existing legal norms be strengthened and that they be supplemented with new rules, so that outer space may be reserved only for peaceful purposes. In this context, greater transparency in the activities of the space Powers would serve as an important confidence-building measure.

Today the use of space-based remote sensing and surveillance techniques offers a unique opportunity for disarmament agreements. This capability remains exclusively in the possession of a few technologically advanced States. We believe that these techniques should be made available, on an equal and non-discriminatory basis and through an appropriate international institution, to all countries.

The rapidly evolving global situation and dramatic changes unprecedented in recent history have given the decade of the 1990s a promising start. We now have a rare opportunity to adopt a fair, non-discriminatory and multilateral approach to disarmament, in a common endeavour to promote regional and international peace and security. The onus lies on all of us - whether here in the First Committee, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission or in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva - to seize this opportunity. Our aspirations are common, and our objective is clear. We must therefore act in unison to ensure a future in which hope will replace fear, and peace will be universal.

Mr. SILVA (Angola) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like, first, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I wish you success in the conduct of the work of this major organ of the General Assembly. We are quite sure that your diplomatic skill, experience, qualifications and dedication cannot but assure us of proper guidance in our work and of a successful outcome. We congratulate the other officers of the Committee too and assure them that they can count on the full cooperation of my delegation.

(Mr. Silva, Angola)

It seems that mankind is becoming increasingly aware of the urgent need to enhance international cooperation in the field of arms control and disarmament. In our view, this is so because, among other things, there have been certain recent historic events which provide obvious lessons for the whole of mankind and which we must put to intelligent use. One of those facts is the war in the Persian Gulf, in which tens of billions of US dollars were spent apparently in order to punish a small aggressor country and to restore legality, but, at the same time and essentially, in order to test certain weapons which had never been tried out in combat and in order to verify their destructive capacity. More than saving a small victim country which had been occupied, the war demonstrated, in fact, the ability of certain countries which possess various types of weapons to impose their will by force and to dominate others.

During the course of the war, which favoured those possessing the most sophisticated weapons, propaganda was used to promote the quality of those weapons as a commodity worth acquiring if one wished to be respected and feared in the world. In a few days' time cities were destroyed, thousands and thousands of human lives were lost in cold blood, and countless economic and social objectives were destroyed. None the less, the quantity and diversity of the weapons used may mean rather little compared to the quantity and diversity of the weapons that now exist in the world.

While it is true that the war was won by those that had the best and most abundant weapons, it is also true that history has implacably recorded this profound madness which was displayed by all of those involved, without distinction between aggressor and those against whom aggression was committed, the defenders and the attackers, the winners and the losers, because by

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engaging in an unconscionable war which should never have started, all of them had to sacrifice innocent lives, programmes of economic and social development and the needs and interests of their respective peoples, ignoring the needs of the neediest.

These and other facts related to the arms race prompt us to act in a reasonable manner and cannot fail to focus our thoughts on what is most beneficial for mankind: the arms race, with its dramatic and inevitable consequences, of which we are all aware, or disarmament and the allocation of the money thus saved to social and economic development programmes.

We favour, most emphatically, the second option. That is why Angola devotes considerable attention to the questions of arms control and disarmament. We welcomed with keen interest the decisions of the United States and the Soviet Union relating to the reduction and elimination of short-range nuclear weapons, intercontinental ballistic missiles and a moratorium on nuclear testing, as well as the announcement of reductions in overall defence spending over the next few years. We are quite sure that if the measures announced by the two super-Powers were promptly and fully put into effect, an atmosphere of mutual confidence would prevail between the two countries, which would help bring about other meaningful steps by them, as well as other disarmament measures by other countries which produce armaments. None the less, bearing in mind all that still needs to be done in the vast disarmament field, we feel that both the commitments contained in the strategic arms reduction Treaty (START) and other measures recently announced still constitute only timid steps. Angola is a small underdeveloped country. It has just emerged from a long war imposed on it from abroad since the time of its accession to independence. It was essential for us to defend our

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national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and, in particular, the life of our people. This was a most burdensome inheritance but one which, none the less, now appears to be a thing of the past.

We wish to take this opportunity to offer our sincere thanks to the Portuguese Government for its interest and efforts as a mediator in the peace negotiations, and also to the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union and to the United Nations Secretary-General for the important role played by his representatives as observers in the negotiating process.

The sad and bitter experience of the war of aggression inflicted on Angola is inevitably an important focal point in our thinking: thousands of defenceless citizens were killed, many of the elderly were left homeless, many children were made orphans, many factories, hospitals and schools were destroyed by enemy bombing. The economy became ever more critical and social problems became more serious. This, in fact, is the result of the arms race, which is the necessary and inevitable instrument of the expansionism of those countries which unjustly imposed war on us. Now that the war is over and now that conditions exist which are conducive to work in an atmosphere of peace, there is an urgent need for us to adopt the measures necessary to rebuild our nation. We need to revive our economy and to establish social development plans and programmes, objectives which we have always pursued since the dawn of our independence, in order to meet the needs of our people in an appropriate manner.

Angola, therefore, is naturally particularly interested in the questions of arms control and disarmament. However, as members well know, Angola is not enclosed in a glass jar; it is not isolated from today's world, a world in which, incredibly, it still seems that force prevails over reason. Angola

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welcomes all initiatives aimed at the elimination of areas of tension in all regions of the world and guaranteeing the maintenance of international peace and security. But Angola is not free from the great danger which threatens the whole of mankind and which is a result, on the one hand, of the mere existence of such vast quantities of armaments - many of which have a death-dealing capacity from which the human conscience simply recoils in horror - and, on the other hand, we are not free from the danger of anachronistic ideals of the arms race and expansionism, which often cause people to see imaginary enemies where none really exist.

Angola is an underdeveloped country, situated in the most backward regio of the world, Africa, a continent with the largest number of recently independent States, where colonial domination lasted the longest and where, accordingly, the negative effects of foreign domination are most acute. More than half the so-called least developed countries are in Africa. That is where we find the highest rates of illiteracy, infant mortality, undernourishment, lack of housing, shortages of food, clothing, drinking wate and so forth. Accordingly, Africa needs a whole range of measures to allow i to emerge from the present situation.

However, in our condition we lack the conditions of absolute security that are needed in order for Governments to be able to devote themselves full to matters of economic and social development. The development of the technological production of nuclear weapons by South Africa, with the full support of certain nuclear Powers, and the existence on our continent of foreign military bases, constitute a constant threat to peace and security an an obstacle to the normal development of our countries.

(Mr. Silva, Angola)

In the opinion of my delegation, the existence of foreign military bases on the territories of other States against the will of their inhabitants is a violation of the independence and sovereignty of such States and a constant threat to the peace and security not only of the countries in whose territories such bases are located but of neighbouring countries. We believe, therefore, that one of the most crucial aspects of disarmament is the need to dismantle the foreign military bases on the territories of other States.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, we wish to emphasize that all the steps taken so far by the two super-Powers at the bilateral level appear to be highly significant, at least at first glance. None the less, we maintain that that they are still timid steps and that much remains to be done, for our planet has an urgent need to rid itself of nuclear weapons. We therefore urge them to take further concrete and far-reaching measures, and we hope that their example will be followed by other nuclear Powers.

The cessation of all nuclear-weapons tests and the signing of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty - in this connection we welcome the Swedish proposal - are among the urgent preliminary measures to be adopted by the nuclear Powers. They would thus clearly demonstrate to the non-nuclear-weapon countries that they really have the political will to halt the production of such weapons.

At the same time, there is an urgent need to negotiate and ratify a multilateral treaty - while not ruling out the possibility of additional bilateral arrangements - on the strengthening of the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, Angola attaches the utmost importance to initiatives to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace and to the constant

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expansion of such zones as a necessary precondition for general and complete disarmament. Such initiatives must also take into account the need to reduce armed forces and conventional weapons.

In Africa, Angola supports the Declaration on the denuclearization of Africa. Nevertheless, we are concerned at South Africa's nuclear capability and its cooperation with certain nuclear Powers. This situation is an obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration to which I have just referred.

We believe that the adoption of regional disarmament measures must not upset the parity between the States of the region concerned. We must eliminate the possibility of military supremacy if we are to guarantee peace and security.

Angola sees a strong, and, indeed, an inevitable, link between disarmament and development. The arms race necessarily entails a decrease in the amount of money available for economic and social development. For that reason, and bearing in mind the positive disarmament measures adopted by the two super-Powers, we favour the establishment of a fund for the economic and social development of developing countries, the money to come from the expected reduction in the military budgets of developed countries.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.